

## HOW CAN LOVE BE COMMANDED?

### On Not Reading Lev 19,17-18 as Law

Leviticus 19,18, the love of neighbour, is a scriptural command that eventually comes to be set abreast Deut 6,5 (the love of God) to form the “greatest” command in early Christian (Matt 22,34-40; Mark 12,28-34; Luke 10,25-28) and Jewish sources (*b. Shabbat* 31a; *Gen. Rab.* 24,7). The development of the double love command tradition in second temple Jewish and early Christian literature has attracted much scholarly interest <sup>1</sup>. This article revisits one interpretative issue in the context of Lev 19,17-18. I wish to comment on the purported “legal” nature of the levitical love command and to ask whether or not it was meant to be practiced — a topic which has attracted relatively little attention — in the light of a broader consideration of the nature of biblical law.

I will frame the discussion by problematising the common reading of Lev 19,17-18 within a legal framework at the outset. I will briefly make a couple of observations about the prohibition of hatred and its reverse, the command to love the neighbour, in Leviticus 19, suggesting that they are best read not as modern positive legal stipulations, but rather as wisdom-laws. This alternative framework draws on some recent advances in narratological studies, especially particular insights on narrative ethics. This section contributes to the ongoing discussion of the nature of biblical law, with Lev 19,17-18 as a case in point.

#### I. THE PROBLEM OF READING LEV 19,17-18 AS A LEGAL MANDATE

Leviticus 19 stands as the apogee of the Holiness Code, but its structure continues to puzzle exegetes <sup>2</sup>. Over two decades ago, C.M. Carmichael observed:

<sup>1</sup> E.g., C. SPICQ, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament. Analyses des textes* (Études Bibliques; Paris 1958); V.P. FURNISH, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN 1972); K. AKIYAMA, *The Love of Neighbour (Lev 19:18). The Early Reception of Its Priestly Formula* (PhD Thesis; Edinburgh 2015).

<sup>2</sup> J. MILGROM, *Leviticus 17–22. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3A; New York 2000) 1596-1602. J. MAGONET, “The Structure and Meaning of Leviticus 19”, *HAR* 7 (1983) 151-167; D.T. STEWART, “Leviticus 19 as Mini-Torah”, *Current*

“The perplexing arrangement of the laws in Leviticus 19 invariably invites comment about their seeming lack of order. Scholars have used the miscellaneous character of the laws as evidence for their originating in different sources, times, and places, before finding a common location in Leviticus 19”<sup>3</sup>.

The situation has hardly changed today, and many studies on Leviticus continue to be unabashedly source- and/or redaction-critical in orientation<sup>4</sup>. Whatever one makes of the overall structure of Leviticus 19 and whatever compositional or historical conclusions are drawn from it, 19,11-18 is unanimously taken as a literary (sub)unit on the basis of content (ethical commands that concern interpersonal/intra-Israelite relations), style/form (a string of mostly apodeictic commands in the form of **לֹא** + *imperfect*), and the presence of the shorter structural marker, **אֲנִי יְהוָה**, at vv. 12, 14, 16, and 18<sup>5</sup>.

Verses 17-18 are structurally bound together and appear as the final set of vv. 11-18<sup>6</sup>. The ethical commands of this unit culminate in the famous command to love the neighbour (v. 18). The verses read as follows:

v. 17    **לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת אַחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חָטָא**  
 v. 18    **לֹא תִקֵּם וְלֹא תִטֹּר אֶת בְּנֵי עַמְךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךְ אֲנִי יְהוָה**

The prohibition of hatred “in your heart” (**בְּלִבְבְּךָ**) is countered by a call for open reproof (v. 17b: **הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ**)<sup>7</sup>. The prohibition of hidden hatred is elaborated by the proscription of **נָקָם** (“avenge”), which pertains to outward action, and **נִטֵּר** (“bear a grudge”), which pertains to inner thought<sup>8</sup>. The love of neighbour (v. 18b) emerges as the antithesis of

*Issues in Priestly and Related Literature*. The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond (eds. R.E. GANE – A. TAGGAR-COHEN) (RBS 82; Atlanta, GA 2015) 299-323.

<sup>3</sup> C.M. CARMICHAEL, “Laws of Leviticus 19”, *HTR* 87 (1994) 239-256.

<sup>4</sup> M. NOTH, *Leviticus* (trans. J.E. ANDERSON) (OTL; London 1965) – German original: *Das dritte Buch Mose*. Leviticus übersetzt und erklärt (ATD 6; Göttingen 1962); MILGROM, *Leviticus 17–22*; C. NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*. A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus (FAT 25; Tübingen 2007).

<sup>5</sup> F. CRÜSEMANN, *The Torah*. Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law (trans. A.W. MAHNKE) (New York 1996) 322-325 – German original: *Die Tora*. Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes (München 1992) 375-378; E.S. GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus* (trans. D.W. STOTT) (OTL; Louisville, KY 1996) 265-272 – German original: *Das dritte Buch Mose*. Leviticus übersetzt und erklärt (ATD 6; Göttingen 1993) 244-248; MILGROM, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1596-1602; R.A. ALLBEE, “Asymmetrical Continuity of Love and Law between the Old and New Testaments”, *JSOT* 31 (2006) 147-166.

<sup>6</sup> MAGONET, “The Structure and Meaning”, 159; D. LUCIANI, *Sainteté et pardon*. Structure littéraire du Lévitique (BETL 185A; Leuven 2005) I, 99-110; NIHAN, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 472-478.

<sup>7</sup> H.-J. FABRY, “יָכַח, *ykh*”, *TDOT* VI, 64-71.

<sup>8</sup> J.L. KUGEL, “On Hidden Hatred and Open Reproach: Early Exegesis of Leviticus 19:17”, *HTR* 80 (1987) 43-61.

— even a cure for — **שנא/נקם/נטר**; open reproof is a key act of **אהב**. The nature of this open reproof has been understood primarily in two ways: [i] instruction or admonition in nonlegal settings (cf. Job 5,17; Ps 6,2; Prov 9,7; Jer 2,19); or [ii] a legal or forensic act of establishing what is right in court (cf. Job 13,3; Isa 29,21; Amos 5,10). Many interpreters read v. 17 (and by extension all of vv. 17-18) within the latter forensic setting. The driving force for this comes from the preceding verses (vv. 15-16), which clearly concern **משפט** and its proper execution<sup>9</sup>. Exegetes extend the legal backdrop of vv. 15-16 to vv. 17-18 with the tacit assumption that both open reproof and the love command are practicable, albeit perhaps not perfectible. For instance, Milgrom asks: “How can love be commanded?”, and immediately suggests: “The answer is simply that the verb *’ahab* signifies not only an emotion or attitude, but also deeds. [...] love must be translated into deeds”<sup>10</sup>.

To be sure, some commentators emphasise the law’s admonitory and instructive rather than legal tenor. Wenham contends that vv. 17-18 are meant to deter the addressees from taking the matter to court and to encourage them to settle the dispute in private<sup>11</sup>. Gerstenberger names Leviticus 19 a “catechism” and observes:

The late collectors of old and even ancient behavioral rules brought together largely social prohibitions deriving from primary groups, reworked them, and then expanded them with admonitory regulations directed to the entire congregation as well as with several precautionary rules with regard to God’s holiness. This generated a broad if not comprehensive catechism of religious life-rules for the early Jewish community, one clearly cast under the motto of the “sanctification” of the entire scope of life in responsibility (v. 2)<sup>12</sup>.

Likewise, Kiuchi opposes the legal reading, though in a rather idiosyncratic fashion. He asks vis-à-vis Lev 19,18: “Does God assume that the Israelites can observe his commandments? Is it appropriate for an exegete to approach the text on the assumption that the addressee, or audience, is deemed to be capable of doing so? Or does God simply lay out the ideal, setting aside the question of practicability?”. He responds: “[A]lthough love should be naturally translated into outward conduct, **אהב** in Lev 19:18b is an emotive term and/or one that expresses one’s total attitude to his/her neighbour”, and so does not refer “necessarily to

<sup>9</sup> J.E. HARTLEY, *Leviticus* (WBC 4; Dallas, TX 1992) 316-317; MILGROM, *Leviticus* 17-22, 1647.

<sup>10</sup> MILGROM, *Leviticus* 17-22, 1653.

<sup>11</sup> G.J. WENHAM, *Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids 1995) 268. Also: H. MADL, “**נטר**, *nāṭar*”, *TDOT* IX, 405, and N. KIUCHI, *Leviticus* (Apollos Old Testament Commentary 3; Downers Grove, IL 2007) 352-353.

<sup>12</sup> GERSTENBERGER, *Leviticus*, 265.

some specific action that is motivated by אהב. In fact, this kind of love is realised only by “negating the egocentric self-love”, which is, in reality, “an impossibility”. Why would Leviticus command an impossibility then? According to Kiuchi, Lev 19,18 “aims to make one aware of, and destroy, the egocentric in human nature. This is achieved by inculcating the realization that one cannot observe this commandment”<sup>13</sup>.

The range of interpretation stems in part from the lack of clarity on what is meant by “law/legal” and “practicable”. What exactly does it mean to practice the love command as a legal stipulation? It seems to me one must bear in mind at least three premises to answer this question. First, law by nature is normative and coercive. A legal stipulation is not an opinion or a mere (divine) recommendation, and hence the addressees are expected to adhere to its demands. Whatever its origins, law is designated as law because of its coercive and normative force<sup>14</sup>. Second, the legal requirement falls within the purview of human agency. The expectation of adherence implies practicability, and for the love command to be incumbent upon its addressees, it needs to be realistic, or rather realisable, and concrete (Kiuchi is a notable exception here). Moran famously made this point vis-à-vis the love of God in Deuteronomy, as did Furnish vis-à-vis the love command in the New Testament<sup>15</sup>. Commentators of Leviticus are right likewise to stress that the love in Leviticus is a charitable act, not a mere platonic feeling<sup>16</sup>. This second dimension of practicability has been the primary, sometimes even exclusive, focus of those who raise this issue. Third, legal commands are justiciable. In order for a command to be a legal command, it needs to be both practicable by the addressee and also assessable by a court of justice. The court envisaged here could be an established judiciary institution or a local assembly of village elders (as Wenham maintains) — or it could be something else<sup>17</sup>. Whatever scenario may be posited, the point is that a command cannot be “legal” unless some type of entity carries out the process of arbitration (19,15). The upshot of these three premises is that a coherent legal reading of Lev 19,17-18 would envisage the love command as a positive, practicable, and justiciable law — indeed, much like a modern law.

<sup>13</sup> KIUCHI, “Commanding an Impossibility?”, 42, 44, 46, 47. Also, N. KIUCHI, *A Study of Ḥaṭṭa’ and Ḥaṭṭa’ūt in Leviticus 4–5* (FAT II/2; Tübingen 2003); L.M. TRAVASKIS, “On a Recent ‘Existential’ Translation of ḥāṭā’”, VT 59 (2009) 313-319.

<sup>14</sup> M. WEINFELD, “The Origin of the Apodictic Law: An Overlooked Source”, VT 23 (1973) 63-75, here 64.

<sup>15</sup> W.L. MORAN, “Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy”, CBQ 25 (1963) 77-87, here 78; FURNISH, *The Love Command*, 199-205.

<sup>16</sup> MILGROM, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1653, 1706.

<sup>17</sup> WENHAM, *Book of Leviticus*, 268, 287-88.

But this legal reading has a couple of serious drawbacks. For one, the language of love (אהב) in the Hebrew Bible unmistakably has an emotional and volitional component<sup>18</sup>. Even in the immediate context of Lev 19,11-18, there is a progressive focus on “the inner attitude of the addressee”<sup>19</sup>. The fact that אהב is contrasted with hatred “in your heart” (בלבבך) highlights that one’s inner disposition or emotion is in view here, not only the external act propelled by it. If both שונא and אהב are employed as dispositional or attitudinal terms that precede and generate any external manifestation, it would mean that biblical law commands rather than recommends — that is, makes it a legal requirement with requisite consequences for those who neglect it — an emotion. But how can one be legally commanded to “feel” something as positive and deep as love? The problem is still more acute, if one remembers that neighbourly love is set as a remedy for the festering hidden hatred (v. 17) and a corrective for acts of oppression against the גר (v. 33)<sup>20</sup>. The demand of Leviticus 19 then is not simply to love the fellow Israelite or the גר but rather to love, or feel the love and possess a loving disposition towards that very person against whom s/he feels intense hatred. It is difficult to see how Leviticus could expect an emotion to be practicable on cue.

Another problem exists on the judiciary side: how can one judge whether someone is feeling the love towards the neighbour? If the love command was meant to be justiciable by the priestly community or by any other human agent at any point in ancient Israel, then how could the priests (or anyone else) have known what people were feeling? To state the obvious, the problem with feelings is that they cannot be seen with human eyes, and hence emotion lies beyond the realm of legal arbitration. If the levitical love command demands not only positive external acts but also internal feelings as indicated above, then it would follow that the command to love could not have been actually justiciable<sup>21</sup>.

This issue of justiciability is not an isolated phenomenon in Leviticus 19. Jackson, for example, cogently advances a similar line of argument concerning the first (Exod 20,2) as well as the tenth commandment (Exod 20,17; cf. Deut 5,21), the prohibition of חמד (“covet”), of the

<sup>18</sup> KIUCHI, *Leviticus*, 354; E. JENNI, “אהב, ’hb to love”, *TLOT* I, 45-54; P. ELS, “אהב”, *NIDOTTE* I, 277-299; G. WALLIS, “אהב, ’ahabh”, *TDOT* I, 101-118; D.J.A. CLINES, “אהב”, *DCH* I, 137-142; S. ACKERMAN, “The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (’āhēb, ’ahābā) in the Hebrew Bible”, *VT* 52 (2002) 437-458.

<sup>19</sup> KIUCHI, “Commanding an Impossibility?”, 35.

<sup>20</sup> A. SCHENKER, “Das Gebot der Nächstenliebe in seinem Kontext (Lev 19,17-18). Lieben ohne Falschheit”, *ZAW* 124 (2012) 244-248.

<sup>21</sup> KUGEL, “On Hidden Hatred”, 44-45.

Decalogue<sup>22</sup>. Ska also rightly observes that “vagueness” or “the lack of precision” — which renders the issue of justiciability extremely problematic — is a salient feature of biblical law, especially of the Covenant Code (Exodus 21–23), the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26), and the laws of Deuteronomy 12–26. They have a distinct “exhortative style”, and their genre appears to be “more that of paraenesis, of moral counsel or exhortation than of legal ‘obligation’”<sup>23</sup>.

The Dead Sea Scrolls already exhibit a keen awareness of the issue of justiciability in the reception of Lev 19,17-18. Clearly, both the *Damascus Document* (CD IX, 2-8a; cf. 5Q12 [5QD]) and *Serekh* (1QS V, 24-VI, 1; cf. 4QS MS-D, fg.1, col. 2) tried to read open reproof in Lev 19,17-18 “legally” and found it wanting. They found that Lev 19,17-18 is far too vague to be justiciable, and so it needed to be amplified. Precisely because both the *Damascus Document* and *Serekh* try to apply Lev 19,17-18 as a legal mandate, they are forced to flesh out the details, such as, the timing of reproof, presence of witnesses, and so forth<sup>24</sup>.

To sum up, the legal reading of Lev 19,17-18 forces one to either downplay the primacy of its dispositional-emotional dimension or to make a legal (and thereby justiciable) requirement out of feelings.

## II. (RE)READING THE LOVE COMMAND AS WISDOM

Can the prohibition of hatred and the command to love in Leviticus 19 really be called “legal” mandates? Narratological insights on narrative ethics in the Pentateuch become useful at this juncture. Scholars have long debated the origins and the nature of biblical law<sup>25</sup>. It was a commonplace to assume that biblical law is a vestige of once-justiciable legal codes or a random collection of some judiciary system of ancient Israel, some of which emanated — at least in their earliest layer — from a specific *Sitz im Leben*<sup>26</sup>. Carmichael is a notable exception; he insists on the

<sup>22</sup> B.S. JACKSON, “The Literary Presentation of Multiculturalism in Early Biblical Law”, *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 8 (1995) 181-206, here 189-190; ID., “Liability for Mere Intention in Early Jewish Law”, *HUCA* 42 (1971) 197-225.

<sup>23</sup> J.L. SKA, *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch*. Exegetical Studies and Basic Questions (FAT 66; Tübingen 2009) 216-218.

<sup>24</sup> L.H. SCHIFFMAN, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code (BJS 33; Chico, CA 1983) 94-95; KUGEL, “On Hidden Hatred”, 53-54.

<sup>25</sup> J.L. SKA, *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch*, 199-208; J. BARTON, “Law and Narrative in the Pentateuch”, *Communio Viatorum* 51 (2009) 126-140.

<sup>26</sup> A. ALT, “Die Ursprünge des israelitischen Rechts”, *Kleine Schriften I* (1959) 278-332 = English translation in: *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (trans.

inseparability of law and narrative from early on, arguing that the laws are derived not from historical circumstances but from biblical narrative and should be read as such <sup>27</sup>. More recently, scholars who endorse the approach of the “law and literature” school have paid more attention to the narrative presentation of biblical law. For instance, Bartor advances this line of argument in her monograph <sup>28</sup>. Watts conducts a rhetorical analysis of Leviticus 1–16, rightly maintaining that the historical meaning or sociological function of the rituals is not the same as the meaning of the texts that describe them. He contends that Leviticus as it stands is a literary text with the intent to persuade the reader rather than a mere copy of a cultic manual book for priests <sup>29</sup>. Jackson demonstrates a far greater convergence between wisdom and law than often thought. He observes that biblical law is less like a manual book for judges and more like a series of moral exhortations with heavily didactic elements for the common people. These commands, which he calls “Wisdom-Laws”, were meant to enable the parties in conflict to resolve their disputes in a “self-executing manner, albeit in a rough-and-ready (‘arbitrary’) manner” <sup>30</sup>. He suggests that one should not confuse the “two legal worlds” and allow “modern conceptions to colour our view of the different legal worlds” <sup>31</sup>. Barton also emphasises the importance of narrative ethics, arguing that the Hebrew Bible on the whole tries to instil moral insights rather than demand blind and “irrational” obedience to God and his divine commands. At least some strands of the Hebrew Bible present ethics in a systematic and rational way, seeking to “win over” the addressees by appealing to reason <sup>32</sup>.

R.A. WILSON) (The Biblical Seminar; Sheffield 1989) 79-132; J. BRIGHT, “The Apodictic Prohibition: Some Observations”, *JBL* 92 (1973) 185-204; WEINFELD, “The Origin of the Apodictic Law”, 63-75; SKA, *The Exegesis of the Pentateuch*, 196-220.

<sup>27</sup> C.M. CARMICHAEL, *Illuminating Leviticus*. A Study of Its Laws and Institutions in the Light of Biblical Narratives (Baltimore, MD 2006). See also: M. DOUGLAS, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford 2001).

<sup>28</sup> A. BARTOR, *Reading Law as Narrative*. A Study in the Casuistic Laws of the Pentateuch (AIL 5; Atlanta, GA 2010). See also R.M. COVER, “Nomos and Narrative”, *Harvard Law Review* 9 (1983) 4-68.

<sup>29</sup> J.W. WATTS, *Ritual and Rhetoric in Leviticus*. From Sacrifice to Scripture (Cambridge 2007). Also see J. MILGROM, “Law and Narrative and the Exegesis of Leviticus XIX 19”, *VT* 46 (1996) 544-548.

<sup>30</sup> B.S. JACKSON, *Wisdom-Laws*. A Study of the Mishpatim of Exodus 21:1 – 22:16 (Oxford 2006) 472.

<sup>31</sup> B.S. JACKSON, “Ruth, the Pentateuch and the Nature of Biblical Law: In Conversation with Jean Louis Ska”, *The Post-Priestly Pentateuch*. New Perspectives on its Redactional Development and Theological Profiles (eds. F. GIUNTOLI – K. SCHMID) (FAT 101; Tübingen 2015) 75-81.

<sup>32</sup> J. BARTON, *Ethics in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 2014).



If one applies the insight that biblical law as it stands in the Hebrew Bible is inextricably tied to the Pentateuchal narrative, one constructive way of maintaining the fuller meaning of the love command is to free it from the judiciary setting. Reading Lev 19,17-18 as a positive, legal mandate or a manual book for the judicial authority is not convincing; rather, the love command has a fundamentally admonitory tenor and concerns both external and internal aspects — the latter being impossible to arbitrate in court. Blenkinsopp has already noted the process of the “sapientialization” of the law in Deuteronomy and, more broadly, the increasing confluence of wisdom and legal traditions in ancient Judaism<sup>33</sup>. Kugel makes a similar point by reading Lev 19,17 in relation to the “whole world of Israelite wisdom”<sup>34</sup>. But it is not merely the call for open reproof but the entire section of Lev 19,11-18.33-34 (and probably the entire chapter) that is closer to wisdom than to modern law. To be sure, they are still “legal” in the sense that they are laid down as apodeictic commands — although the use of the second person is actually closer in form to wisdom exhortations than to Ancient Near Eastern law collections<sup>35</sup>. The command to love the neighbour then seems to be best read as wisdom or, to borrow Jackson’s term, “wisdom-laws”, rather than a justiciable code of conduct.

If these observations are correct, then a couple of wider implications may be noted. First, the traditional clear-cut distinction between law and wisdom is untenable. It muddles more than clarifies the nature of biblical law. Second, ethical commands in the Pentateuchal law are less regulative and more exhortative, designed to instil ethical insights rather than dictate behavioural norms or even adjudicate disputes. As Barton puts it: “Legal material is good evidence for ethical ideas in ancient Israel precisely because it is not very ‘legal’, but addresses the conscience of the hearer and sets forth ideals of conduct”<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> J. BLENKINSOPP, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*. The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism (Oxford 1983) 118-119, 151-182.

<sup>34</sup> KUGEL, “On Hidden Hatred”, 45.

<sup>35</sup> E. OTTO, *Kontinuum und Proprium*. Studien zur Sozial- und Rechtsgeschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 8; Wiesbaden 1996).

<sup>36</sup> BARTON, *Ethics in Ancient Israel*, 148.



## SUMMARY

This article argues that the command to love the neighbour in Lev 19,18 is best read as a wisdom-law. The article problematises the common forensic reading of Lev 19,17-18, identifying some interpretative issues in viewing the love command as a legal mandate. It then suggests an alternative interpretative framework, drawing on the insights of narratological and genre studies.

## THE REFERENT OF “OUR SHIELD” IN PSALM 84,10 <sup>1</sup>

### I. INTRODUCTION: SYNTACTIC AMBIGUITIES IN Ps 84,10

Psalm 84 begins with the title (v. 1) and is followed by the psalmist's longing for the dwelling place of YHWH (vv. 2-5). The psalmist then pronounces a blessing over the pilgrims to his sanctuary: with a divinely endowed strength, they go through the Valley of Baca turning it into a place of springs, and eventually arrive in Zion to be in his presence (vv. 6-8). At this point, the psalmist prays for the well-being of YHWH's anointed (vv. 9-10). With a request to listen to his prayer (v. 9), the psalmist prays (v. 10):

(1) מַגִּנְנוּ רֵאה אֱלֹהִים וְהִבֵּט פָּנֵי מְשִׁיחֶךָ (Ps 84,10)

Depending on whether one analyzes the initial noun phrase (מַגִּנְנוּ) as a vocative or object, two different translations are possible, as in (2) and (3) below:

(2) O our shield, behold, O God, and look upon the face of your anointed.

(3) O God, behold our shield and look upon the face of your anointed.

In (2) “our shield” refers to God, to whom the prayer is addressed, while in (3) it refers to a human being, who can be identified with “your anointed” at the end of the verse.

After reviewing how translators have understood the phrase in question, this article will review research on the topic, analyze the syntactic properties of the verse, and move on to a consideration of semantic features. Metaphorical use of the expression “(our) shield” in the Hebrew Bible as well as the discourse context of “our shield” in Ps 84,10 will also be examined in an effort to determine the referent of “our shield” in this verse.

#### 1. *Translations*

The Septuagint renders Ps 84[83],10 as (4) below. The initial noun ὑπερασπιστά, which means “protector”, is in the vocative, which has a

<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by a research grant from Seoul Women's University (2016).

form distinct from the accusative in Greek <sup>2</sup>. Thus, the Greek rendering unambiguously reflects the understanding of מַגִּנּוֹ as a reference to God.

- (4) ὑπερασπιστὰ ἡμῶν ἰδέ, ὁ θεός, καὶ ἐπίβλεψον ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ χριστοῦ σου

The Vulgate follows the Septuagint, as (5) below shows. The initial noun *protector* can be a vocative, but not an accusative <sup>3</sup>.

- (5) *protector noster aspice Deus et respice in faciem christi tui*

Some modern translations also take מַגִּנּוֹ as a reference to God. This has been the traditional view, as shown in the translations below (6)-(8) <sup>4</sup>.

- (6) God, our shield, look, and see the face of your anointed (*New Jerusalem Bible*, 1985).  
 (7) Gott, unser Schild, schaue doch; sieh doch an das Antlitz deines Gesalbten! (*Revidierte Lutherbibel*, 1984).  
 (8) Toi qui es notre bouclier, vois, ô Dieu! Et regarde la face de ton oint! (*Nouvelle Edition de Genève*, 1979).

However, other translations take it as an accusative, and thus the object of the verb that follows, as shown in the translations below (9)-(11) <sup>5</sup>.

- (9) Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989).  
 (10) Gott, sieh her auf unsern Schild, schau auf das Antlitz deines Gesalbten! (*Einheitsübersetzung*, 1980).  
 (11) Dieu, vois celui qui est notre bouclier, regarde le visage de ton messie (*Traduction œcuménique de la Bible*, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Symmachus and Aquila also agree in rendering the מַגִּנּוֹ as a vocative noun (ὑπερασπιστὰ and θυρεέ respectively) referring to God. See T. BOOTH, “Psalm LXXXIV, A Prayer of the Anointed”, VT 44 (1994) 435 n. 9; J. GOLDINGAY, *Psalms*. Vol. 2: *Psalms 42–89* (Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 596.

<sup>3</sup> Aramaic versions do not help much in this matter, since their renderings do not reflect the reading of the MT. The Targum renders מַגִּנּוֹ as מַגִּנּוֹתָא אֲבוֹתָנָא (‘the meritorious deeds of our forefathers’), while the Peshitta translates it as ܐܠܗܝܢ (‘on account of us’).

<sup>4</sup> There are other versions that take this option: e.g., *King James Version* (1611), *American Standard Version* (1901), *Jewish Publication Society of America Version* (1917), *Menge-Bibel* (1926), *Bible de Jérusalem* (1973), *Schlachter-Bibel 2000* (2003), and the translations by Louis Segond (1910), by A. Crampon (1923), and by E. Dhorme (1959).

<sup>5</sup> The majority of recent translations follow this option: e.g., *New King James Version* (1982), *New International Version* (1984), *New Jewish Publication Society of America Tanakh* (1985), *New Revised Standard Version* (1989), *New American Bible* (1991), *New American Standard Bible* (1995), *English Standard Version* (2001), *Gute Nachricht Bibel* (1997), and *Zürcher Bibel* (2007).

## 2. Research

The referent of מַגִּנּוּ can be co-referential with either אֱלֹהִים or מְשִׁיחַ in the same verse. If it refers to the former, it is a term of address for God, but if it refers to the latter, it is the object of the verb רָאָה.

The identification of “our shield” (מַגִּנּוּ) with “your anointed” (מְשִׁיחַ) derives from the recognition of the chiasmic structure of the verse, as (12) below shows.

### (12) Chiasmic Structure of Ps 84,10

- a* מַגִּנּוּ
- b* רָאָה אֱלֹהִים
- b'* וְהִבֵּט
- a'* פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחַךְ

According to this analysis, מַגִּנּוּ (*a*) and פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחַךְ (*a'*) refer to the same person. Thus, A.R. Johnson argues that מַגִּנּוּ here “should be construed as the object of the verb so as to yield an example of chiasmus”<sup>6</sup>. In the same vein, M.J. Dahood, who reads *mēgānēnū* (“our suzerain”) for MT *māginnēnū* (“our shield”), takes the view that the phrase in question “designates the Davidic king and not God himself”, basing his argument on the chiasmic structure of the verse<sup>7</sup>. M.E. Tate also supports this view, pointing to the parallelism between v. 10a and v. 10b<sup>8</sup>. According to J. Goldingay, though at first the readers are not sure how to understand the shield at the beginning of v. 10, the expression “our anointed” at the end of the verse suggests that the two words “are parallel and refer to the king”<sup>9</sup>. In the same vein, J. Limburg does not include Ps 84,10 in his list of examples that describe God as “shield”<sup>10</sup>. Likewise, most scholars equate the shield with a royal person<sup>11</sup>. However, these scholars do not

<sup>6</sup> A.R. JOHNSON, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff 1955) 105 n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> M.J. DAHOOD, *Psalms II. 51–100*. Introduction, Translation, and Notes (AB 17; Garden City, NY 1968) 282; *Psalms I. 1–50*. Introduction, Translation, and Notes (AB 16; Garden City, NY 1966) 16–18. Dahood’s identification of מַגִּנּוּ as a suzerain is based on a general’s title in Punic *magōn*. But, as M.Z. BRETTLER, *God is King*. Understanding an Israelite Metaphor (JSOTSS 76; Sheffield 1989) 177 n. 47, notes, reading the unproblematic Hebrew word מַגִּנּוּ as “suzerain” based on Punic evidence is unnecessary.

<sup>8</sup> M.E. TATE, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC 20; Dallas, TX 1998) 354.

<sup>9</sup> GOLDINGAY, *Psalms 42–89*, 596. For a similar view, see J.W. ROGERSON – J.W. MCKAY, *Psalms 51–100* (Cambridge 1977) 172.

<sup>10</sup> J. LIMBURG, “Psalms, Book Of”, *ABD* V, 530.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., C.A. BRIGGS, *A Critical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; Edinburgh 1907) 228; H.-J. KRAUS, *Psalms 60–150*. A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis, MN 1993) 170; M.D. GOULDER, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (JSOTSS 20; Sheffield 1982) 46; W. BRUEGGEMANN – W.H. BELLINGER, JR., *Psalms* (NCBC; New York 2014) 365; O. WIKANDER, *Drought, Death and the Sun in Ugarit and Ancient Israel*. A Philological and Comparative Study (CBOT 61; Winona Lake, IN 2014) 189.

provide additional supportive arguments other than Johnson’s account which divides the verse into a parallel structure.

Unlike the majority of scholars, there are others who take the view that the expression refers to God. M. Mannati states that מַגִּנְנוּ is not a complement of רָאָה but in apposition with אֱלֹהִים<sup>12</sup>. L. Jacquet also thinks that as a vocative it refers to YHWH<sup>13</sup>. In the same vein, T. Booij takes it as a vocative or apposition to the vocative אֱלֹהִים<sup>14</sup>. P. Auffret analyzes the expression as a term of address for God<sup>15</sup>. M.R. Hauge also understands it as a reference to God<sup>16</sup>.

There are still others who acknowledge both possibilities. A. Weiser translates v. 10a as “O God, our shield, behold”, while quoting in an accompanying footnote the alternative translation of the RSV: “Behold our shield, O God”<sup>17</sup>. For Ringgren, whether the shield in this verse refers to God or not is an ambiguous matter<sup>18</sup>. E. Zenger also considers both possibilities<sup>19</sup>.

## II. SYNTAX

### 1. *Verbs of sight in the imperative*

The two verbs in Ps 84,10, רָאָה (*qal*) and נִבֵּט (*hifil*), are in the imperative. In the Hebrew Bible, the verb נִבֵּט in the *hifil* is attested 68 times. In 21 of these 68 cases (Num 23,21; 1 Sam 17,42; 2 Kgs 3,14; Isa 5,12; 22,11; 38,11; 63,15; Hab 1,5; Pss 22,18; 33,13; 80,15; 84,10; 91,8; 142,5; Job 28,24; 35,5; Lam 1,11.12; 2,20; 5,1; 1 Chr 21,21), the verb נִבֵּט is coordinated, either syndetically or asyndetically, with a clause that contains the verb רָאָה (*qal*). Most of them occur in poetic passages. In five cases (Isa 38,11; Hab 1,5; Ps 84,10; Lam 1,11; 2,20), רָאָה precedes נִבֵּט, while in the remaining 16 cases the order is reversed. In 10 of the 21 such occurrences (Isa 63,15; Hab 1,5; Pss 80,15; 84,10; 142,5; Job 35,5;

<sup>12</sup> M. MANNATI, *Les Psaumes*. Vol. 3: *Psaumes 73–106* (Paris 1967) 121 n. 13.

<sup>13</sup> L. JACQUET, *Les Psaumes et le cœur de l'homme*. Étude textuelle, littéraire et doctrinale. Vol. 2: *Psaumes 42 à 100* (Gembloux 1977) 623, 629.

<sup>14</sup> BOOIJ, “Psalm LXXXIV”, 435.

<sup>15</sup> P. AUFFRET, “Qu’elles sont aimables, tes demeures! Étude structurelle du psaume 84”, *BZ* 38 (1994) 34.

<sup>16</sup> M.R. HAUGE, *Between Sheol and Temple*. Motif Structure and Function in the I-Psalms (JSOTSS 178; Sheffield 1995) 39.

<sup>17</sup> A. WEISER, *The Psalms*. A Commentary (OTL; London 1962) 565.

<sup>18</sup> D.N. FREEDMAN – M.P. O’CONNOR – H. RINGGREN, “מַגִּנְנוּ”, *TDOT* VIII, 85.

<sup>19</sup> F.-L. HOSSFELD – E. ZENGER, *Psalms* 2. A Commentary on Psalms 51–100 (ed. K. BALTZER) (Minneapolis, MN 2005) 348–349.

Lam 1,11.12; 2,20; 5,1), both verbs are in the imperative. These ten cases share common syntactic properties. Both the imperatives (ראה and נבט) occupy the initial position in each clause, and the second imperative is immediately preceded by the conjunction *waw*, as shown below (13).

- (13) הבט משמים וראה מזבל קדשך ותפארתך

Look down from heaven and see from your holy and glorious dwelling (Isa 63,15).

There is one possible exception: Ps 84,10, which has the noun phrase מנגנו before the verb ראה. If the former is the object of the latter, it would make a unique case of the verb occupying a non-clause-initial position in such a construction. But if מנגנו is a vocative, which is outside of the clause boundary, then the verb occupies the initial position of the clause.

In contrast, in five (Isa 5,12; 22,11; Ps 33,13; 91,8; Job 28,24) of the other eleven cases in which the verbs are finite, at least one verb is preceded by a noun or prepositional phrase. For instance, in Isa 5,12 quoted in (14) below, the verbs יביטו and ראו are preceded by the noun phrases, את פעל יהוה and מעשה ידיו respectively.

- (14) ואת פעל יהוה לא יביטו ומעשה ידיו לא ראו

But they do not consider the deeds of YHWH, nor do they see the work of his hands (Isa 5,12).

In four (Isa 38,11; Pss 22,18; 33,13; Job 28,24) of the same eleven cases, the two clauses are connected asyndetically, that is, without the *waw*, as shown in (15) and (16) below.

- (15) אספר כל־עצמותי המה יביטו יראו־בי

I can count all my bones. They look, stare at me (Ps 22,18).

- (16) משמים הביט יהוה ראה את־כל־בני האדם

From heaven YHWH looks down; he sees all the sons of men (Ps 33,13).

The examples (15) and (16) above contain both the features mentioned above: the finite verbs, יביטו in (15) and הביט in (16), are preceded by a phrase (an independent pronoun המה in the former and a prepositional phrase משמים in the latter), and in each example the two clauses are juxtaposed without a conjunction.

In sum, when the verbs of sight ראה (*qal*) and נבט (*hif*) are imperative in a coordinate structure, they come at the beginning of each clause and an explicit coordination is present. When the verbs are finite, however, they are often preceded by a phrase and/or juxtaposed asyndetically. The analysis of מנגנו as a vocative is in accord with the shared syntactic usage of the two verbs of sight when they are coordinated with each

other. Considering the paucity of examples, these syntactic properties cannot be determining factors in resolving the ambiguity of the phrase in question. Yet they lend support to the option of taking it as a vocative.

## 2. *A divine epithet and a divine name or title in apposition*

Booij mentions two verses as examples of an apposition preceding the vocative to which it belongs: Jer 17,13 and Ps 94,1<sup>20</sup>. It is important to examine closely these two cases.

### (17) מקוה ישראל יהוה כל-עוזבך יבשו

O Hope of Israel, YHWH, all who abandon you will be put to shame (Jer 17,13).  
(epithet + name)

In (17) above, the divine name is preceded by the expression "O hope of Israel". Jer 17,13 is structurally similar to Ps 84,10a in that the divine name (Elohim in Ps 84,10a and YHWH in Jer 17,13) is preceded by a noun phrase that consists of a noun (-מנן in Ps 84,10a and מקוה in Jer 17,13) and a modifying element (-נו in Ps 84,10a and ישראל in Jer 17,13) which refers to the community of the psalmist.

### (18) אל-נקמות יהוה אל נקמות הופיע

O God of vengeance, YHWH, O God of vengeance, shine forth! (Ps 94,1).  
(epithet + name + epithet)

In (18) above, the divine name YHWH is preceded and followed by the expression, "God of vengeance". The imperative follows this sequence of vocatives.

Another case can be found in which a divine epithet is followed by a vocative with the same referent. In (19) below, God is consecutively called upon as "our shield" and "Lord".

### (19) אל-תהרגם פך-ישכחו עמי הניעמו בחילך והורידמו מגנו אדני

Do not kill them lest my people forget. Shake them with your power. Bring them down, our shield, O Lord! (Ps 59,12).  
(epithet + title)

The constituent order of the examples (17)-(19) above do not exactly match that of Ps 84,10a, which has an intervening verb between the preceding epithet and the following vocative (epithet + V + name/title). However, they show that divine epithets ("hope of Israel", "God of vengeance", and

<sup>20</sup> BOOIJ, "Psalm LXXXIV", 435.



“our shield”) can precede the unmarked or more usual divine name (“YHWH”) or title (“Lord”). The attestations of the above syntagmatic arrangements give credence to the argument that the *מגננו* in Ps 84,10a is a divine epithet that precedes the divine name *אלהים*.

### 3. *Structure of the prayer in Ps 84,9-10*

As we have seen above, the most persuasive and virtually the only argument that has been presented to support the analysis of *מגננו* as the object of the verb is the chiasmic structure of v. 10. However, the structure of the verse needs to be seen in the context of the prayer that spans vv. 9-10. This prayer, which is called an “audience petition” to YHWH<sup>21</sup>, contains the only requests in the psalm. The analysis of *מגננו* as a vocative fits well within this parallel structure, as (20) below shows.

(20) A structure of Ps 84,9-10

- v. 9 יהוה אלהים צבאות שמעה תפילתי האזינה אלהי יעקב סלה  
 v. 10 מגננו ראה אלהים והבט פני משיחך

- v. 9 vocative–verb–object NP  
 verb–vocative–(object NP)  
v. 10 vocative–verb–(object NP)  
 vocative–verb–object NP

The prayer consists of four clauses or lines, two in each verse. All four verbs are in the imperative. There is an ellipsis (gapping) of the object in each verse. The first and last verbs in this prayer are followed by an object noun phrase (NP), while the second and third do not have an overt object. That is, in v. 9 the first clause has an object while the second omits it. On the other hand, in v. 10 the first clause lacks an overt object while the second specifies the shared object. Therefore, in one of the lines (the second line of v. 9 and the first line of v. 10) of both the couplets, the object is gapped. Even though the order of constituents in the two verses are different from each other, each has a set of verbs of perception: auditory (*שמעה* and *האזינה*) in v. 9 and visual (*ראה* and *הבט*) in v. 10. The verbs in each verse govern a common object (*תפילתי* in v. 9 and *פני משיחך* in v. 10). Moreover, each verse contains two vocatives if our analysis of *מגננו* is correct: in v. 9 one precedes and the other follows the verb, while in v. 10 both vocatives immediately precede the verb. Each verse demonstrates a parallel structure, though the arrangement of the constituent elements

<sup>21</sup> HOSSFELD – ZENGER, *Psalms* 2, 356.

differs in the two verses <sup>22</sup>. Thus, the analysis of מַגִּנּוֹ as a vocative not only accords well with the structure of the prayer but also highlights its artistic symmetry. The prayer contains two couplets with a parallel structure. Each of them demonstrates an identical deep structure as shown in the reconstructed sentences in (21) below.

(21) Syntactic parallelism in the prayer of Ps 84,9-10

	<i>vocative</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>object NP</i>	
<i>a</i>	יהוה אלהים צבאות	שמעה	תפלתי	(v. 9)
<i>a'</i>	אלהי יעקב	האזינה		
<i>b</i>	מַגִּנּוֹ	ראה	פני משיחך	(v. 10)
<i>b'</i>	אלהים	והבט		

In v. 9 the object of the auditory verbs is תפלתי (“my prayer”) in the middle of the verse, while in v. 10 the object of the visual verbs is פני משיחך (“the face of your anointed”) at the end of the verse. These noun phrases contain morpho-syntactically distinct forms on the surface. Yet they have the same underlying structure. The former consists of a noun -תפלת- with pronominal suffix י-, while the latter is comprised of a noun פני with the noun phrase משיחך that modifies it. As the analysis in (22) below shows, both the noun phrases consist of a modified noun followed by a modifier in the form of a pronominal suffix or a noun.

(22) The grammatical parallelism of the object noun phrases in Ps 84,9-10

<i>noun phrase</i>		<i>noun</i>		<i>modifier</i>	
תפלתי	→	תפלת-	+	י-	(v. 9)
פני משיחך	→	פני	+	משיחך	(v. 10)

Grammatically, as the modifier of the preceding noun, משיחך in v. 10 corresponds to the suffix י- of תפלתי in v. 9. Given the structural analysis of (21) above, the grammatical parallelism in (22) above suggests a semantic correspondence between the two couplets. A. Berlin notes that “a similarity in structure leads to a perception of some correlations in

<sup>22</sup> Chiasm in v. 9 can be considered a form of parallelism. E.L. GREENSTEIN, “How Does Parallelism Mean?”, *A Sense of Text. The Art of Language in the Study of Biblical Literature* (ed. S.A. GELLER) (Winona Lake, IN 1982) 61, views chiasm as a repetition of the deep structure “with a modification in surface structure”. In support of this view, see also T. COLLIN, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry. A Grammatical Approach to the Stylistic Study of the Hebrew Prophets* (Rome 1978) 23, and A. BERLIN, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge <sup>2</sup>2008) 23-24.

meaning”, and E.L. Greenstein further states that “more often than not parallelism serves the semantic association between two somewhat different concepts or images”<sup>23</sup>. The objects of listening and seeing are the prayer and the face, respectively. As the prayer is called “my” prayer, the face probably also refers to the face of the speaker. Then, the phrase פני משיחך (“the face of your anointed”) should be regarded as a poetic paraphrase of \**pānay* (“my face”). The anointed is none other than the psalmist himself<sup>24</sup>, or at least, the psalmist identifies himself with the one anointed by God. The prayer contains repeated invocations of God and repeated requests for auditory and visual attention, as well as the object of attention, that is, the speaker himself. Thus, the parallel structure of the prayer in vv. 9-10 supports the analysis of מגננו as a vocative.

### III. MEANING

#### 1. *Your anointed*

The last word in Ps 84,10 משיחך is commonly interpreted as referring to a king<sup>25</sup>, though the possibility cannot be ruled out that it may point to a (high) priest, as the *Jerusalem Bible* notes<sup>26</sup>. The expression “the face of your anointed” is attested in Ps 132,10 and 2 Chr 6,42. In the former, “the anointed” (משיחך) refers to a Davidic king, while in the latter, “the anointed” (משיחך, pl.) probably refers to David and Solomon<sup>27</sup>.

In Ps 84,10, the same expression could refer to either a king or a high priest<sup>28</sup>. Whether the anointed refers to a king or a priest, the prayer concerns a request to look favorably and compassionately on the leader of the community. H.-J. Kraus takes the anointed as the reigning king in the pre-exilic period<sup>29</sup>. According to Tate, the king is intended for the

<sup>23</sup> BERLIN, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 23; GREENSTEIN, “How Does Parallelism Mean?”, 65.

<sup>24</sup> BOOIJ, “Psalm LXXXIV”, 440, thinks that the speaker of vv. 9-10 is the king, and the whole psalm should be classified as a “royal prayer”.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see DAHOOD, *Psalms II*, 282; T. BOOIJ, “Royal Words in Psalm LXXXIV 11”, VT 36 (1986) 119; BRUEGGEMANN – BELLINGER, *Psalms*, 365.

<sup>26</sup> *The Old Testament of the Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, NY 1966) 869 n. g. See also ÉCOLE BIBLIQUE ET ARCHÉOLOGIQUE FRANÇAISE, *La Bible de Jérusalem* (Paris 2000) 1013.

<sup>27</sup> R.B. DILLARD, 2 *Chronicles* (WBC 15; Waco, TX 1987) 51. However, they can also be interpreted as the priests, who are mentioned in the immediately preceding verse.

<sup>28</sup> Along with these two possibilities, R.J. TOURNAY, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms. The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem* (tr. J.E. CROWLEY) (JSOTSS 118; Sheffield 1991) 148, also mentions an interpretation of the expression that identifies the anointed with the community itself.

<sup>29</sup> KRAUS, *Psalms 60–150*, 167, 169.

pre-exilic period, but the high priest could be meant in the postexilic period<sup>30</sup>. E. Zenger is likewise open to both possibilities, but he prefers to view the anointed as a future king (not the reigning king) under the God of Zion<sup>31</sup>. Notably, the expression משיח יהוה in the Hebrew Bible always refers to a king (1 Sam 24,7.11; 26,16; 2 Sam 1,16; 19,22; Lam 4,20).

## 2. Shield as a reference to a king

While the priests are not associated with a shield in the Hebrew Bible, there are two cases in which “shield” might be regarded as a reference to a king: Hos 4,18 and Ps 47,10<sup>32</sup>. But Hos 4,18 offers many textual problems and the expression מגניה (lit. “her shields”) itself can hardly be considered a reference to a king<sup>33</sup>. As for the expression “shields of the earth” (מגני-ארץ) in Ps 47,10, Dahood equates the מגני-ארץ with God, explaining the plural noun as *pluralis majestatis*, while Booij suggests that it means “the gods of the divine council”<sup>34</sup>. But both these suggestions are highly speculative. Rather, the “shields of the earth” (מגני-ארץ) in Ps 47,10 signify the weapons or powers that “the princes of the peoples” (נדיבי עמים), mentioned in the same verse, have in possession<sup>35</sup>. Even if the shields metaphorically referred to the kings in this verse, it should be noted that the reference is not to the king of Israel but to the foreign rulers.

In addition, the parallel use of מגננו and מלכנו in Ps 89,19 might also serve as supportive evidence for identifying “our shield” with a human king in Ps 84,10.

(23) כי ליהוה מגננו ולקדוש ישראל מלכנו

For our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel (Ps 89,19, *The New Revised Standard Version*).

<sup>30</sup> TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 360.

<sup>31</sup> HOSSFELD – ZENGER, *Psalms* 2, 356.

<sup>32</sup> TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 360.

<sup>33</sup> For example, J.L. MAYS, *Hosea. A Commentary* (OTL; London 1969) 76, emends the text and reads *māginnîm* (“the shameless”), while D. STUART, *Hosea-Jonah* (WBC 31; Dallas, TX 1987) 72, reads *mēginnāh* (“insolence”) instead of the *māginnēyhā* of the MT. The latter emendation reflects the φρὴνῆματος of the LXX. T.E. MCCOMISKEY, *The Minor Prophets. An Exegetical and Expository Commentary. Vol. 1: Hosea, Joel, and Amos* (Grand Rapids, MI 1992) 69, 73, renders the word as “their glory”, while proposing to interpret it as “leaders” of Israel.

<sup>34</sup> DAHOOD, *Psalm I*, 283; BOOIJ, “Psalm LXXXIV”, 434 n. 8.

<sup>35</sup> This line of understanding is reflected in the LXX translation, οἱ κραταιοὶ τῆς γῆς, (“the powerful of the earth”).

As the *NRSV* translation above shows, most modern translators and commentators identify the shield in (23) above with a human king<sup>36</sup>. However, Psalm 89 deals with the praise of YHWH as well as the failure of the Davidic kings. Ps 89,19 is located in the context of praising YHWH<sup>37</sup>. The statement that “our king belongs to YHWH” does not fit in this context. Therefore, the *lamed* at the beginning of each clause in this verse has been analyzed as an “emphatic” *lamed*<sup>38</sup>. F. Nötscher, while expressing the view that occurrences of emphatic *lamed* are “comparatively few”, adduces Ps 89,19 as one of its clear examples, rendering the verse as: “Denn fürwahr Jahwe (ליהוה) ist unser Schild und der Heilige Israels (יְהוָה) unser König”<sup>39</sup>. O. Eissfeldt also takes the two *lameds* as “ein asseveratives *l* mit der Bedeutung ‘fürwahr’” and translates the verse similarly: “Ja, fürwahr, Jahwe ist unser Schild, fürwahr, der Heilige Israels unser König”<sup>40</sup>. In the same vein, Dahood takes the *lameds* before the divine name and the divine epithet as emphatic *lameds*, rendering the verse as: “Truly Yahweh is our Suzerain, the Holy One of Israel our King!”<sup>41</sup>. Furthermore, J. Huehnergard also cites the verse as one of “the most probable instances” of emphatic proclitic *lamed*<sup>42</sup>. Other scholars also take מַגִּנְנוּ in Ps 89,19 as a reference to YHWH, recognizing the existence of emphatic *lamed* in this verse<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, “our shield” and “our king” in Ps 89,19 probably do not refer to a human king but to God as a divine king. In fact, God is portrayed as a shield in the psalms “always in expression of trust”, while king is “a central metaphor for God in the psalms”<sup>44</sup>. Understanding both terms, “shield” and “king”, as references to God fits well with the context of praising God in Ps 89,19.

<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., KRAUS, *Psalms 60–150*, 127; GOLDINGAY, *Psalms 42–89*, 675–676; BRUEGGEMANN – BELLINGER, *Psalms*, 383; WEISER, *The Psalms*, 592.

<sup>37</sup> HOSSFELD – ZENGER, *Psalms 2*, 406, analyzes the structure of the Psalm 89 as hymn (vv. 2–19), divine discourse (vv. 20–38), and lament (vv. 39–52).

<sup>38</sup> See L. KOEHLER – W. BAUMGARTNER – J. J. STAMM, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (tr. and ed. M.E.J. RICHARDSON) (Leiden 2001) 510–511.

<sup>39</sup> F. NÖTSCHER, “Zum emphatischen Lamed”, *VT* 3 (1953) 379.

<sup>40</sup> O. EISSFELDT, *Kleine Schriften IV* (Tübingen 1962–1973) 134 n. 1.

<sup>41</sup> DAHOOD, *Psalms II*, 309, 316; *Psalms I*, 143.

<sup>42</sup> J. HUEHNERGARD, “Asseverative \**la* and Hypothetical \**lu*/*law* in Semitic”, *JAOS* 103 (1983) 591. For more on emphatic *lamed*, see W. GESENIUS, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (ed. E. KAUTZSCH; tr. A. E. COWLEY) (Oxford 1910) § 143 e; B.K. WALTKE – M. O’CONNOR, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN 1990) 211–212; R.J. WILLIAMS, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax* (rev. J.C. BECKMAN) (Toronto – Buffalo, NY – London 2007) 111.

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., W.L. MORAN, “The Hebrew Language in Its Northwest Semitic Background”, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright* (ed. G.E. WRIGHT) (Garden City, NY 1965) 60; BOOIJ, “Psalm LXXXIV”, 434 n. 8; TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 407, 410.

<sup>44</sup> LIMBURG, “Psalms”, 530.

In sum, there is no unambiguous evidence in the Hebrew Bible that points to the existence of metaphoric reference to a human king as a shield. M.Z. Brettler assumes that Ps 84,10 is "the only unambiguous case of מגן 'shield' referring to a king" and states that this weak human shield contrasts with the powerful divine shield attested in other places of the Hebrew Bible<sup>45</sup>. But he does not offer primary evidence that would support his assumption. Considering the metaphorical use of the image of shield in the Hebrew Bible, the shield in Ps 84,10 is less likely to refer to a human leader of the community.

### 3. *Shield as a reference to God*

Outside of Ps 84,10, God is often described as a shield in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 15,1; Deut 33,29; 2 Sam 22,3.31; Pss 3,4; 7,11; 18,3.31; 28,7; 33,20; 59,12; 84,12; 89,19; 115,9.10.11; 119,114; 144,2; Prov 2,7; 30,5). Among other metaphors for God in the Book of Psalms, "shield" appears in an extraordinary number of cases<sup>46</sup>. The very expression מגננו is attested in Pss 33,20 and 59,12. In the former, it is used in conjunction with עזרנו ("our help") as a predicate that describes God's character: "he is our help and our shield". In the latter, it is used as a vocative after a sequence of requests, as we have seen in (19) above, repeated here in (24) below. This is the case where God is called מגננו in a prayer.

(24) אֲלֹת־הָרֶגֶם כִּי־יִשְׁכַּחוּ עַמִּי הַנִּיעַמּוּ בַחֵילְךָ וְהוֹרִידֵמוּ מִגִּנְנוּ אֲדֹנָי

Do not kill them lest my people forget. Shake them with your power. Bring them down, our shield, O Lord! (Ps 59,12).

In these and other places in which God is referred to as a shield, the psalmist prays for protection and help from God in a situation that calls for God's intervention. In Ps 84,10, מגננו also appears in the context of request for God's favorable care for the leader of the community. Furthermore, a couple of verses later the psalmist explicitly states that God is "a sun and shield", as (25) below shows.

(25) כִּי שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמִגָּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים חֵן וְכִבְדּוֹ יֵתֵן יְהוָה

For YHWH God is a sun and shield. YHWH gives grace and glory (Ps 84,12).

This verse can serve as a key to understanding the expression מגננו in v. 10. If the latter referred to a king, then we would encounter a situation where the same word "shield" refers to a human king in v. 10 but to God

<sup>45</sup> BRETTLER, *God is King*, 46.

<sup>46</sup> LIMBURG, "Psalms", 530.

in v. 12. We cannot rule out the possibility of the same word referring to different entities <sup>47</sup>. Yet, addressing God as shield after asking him to look upon “our shield” would have confused the audience/readers, at least in the final form of the psalm. A. Wiig rightly points out that “the statement in Ps 84,12 is assumed in Ps 84,10”, in which the psalmist prays that tangible and terrestrial protection (“shield”) be given to the king by YHWH’s celestial divine power (“sun”) <sup>48</sup>. Unlike v. 12, in v. 10 the first-person plural pronominal suffix *-נו* is attached to *מִגָּן*. But this is not a sufficient reason to reject the identification of “our shield” (v. 10) and “a shield” (v. 12), since the former is placed in a prayer to God and the latter in a statement about God.

#### 4. Discourse context

If *מִגָּנוֹ* is a reference to God, then the poet is addressing God in a form otherwise unattested in Psalm 84. However, in the psalm, the forms of reference to God are varied each time God is addressed. God is called “YHWH of hosts” (v. 2), “YHWH of hosts, my king and my God” (v. 4), “YHWH God of hosts” (v. 9), “God of Jacob” (v. 9), and simply “God” (v. 10). In addition, the psalmist states that “YHWH God is a sun and shield” (v. 12) <sup>49</sup>. As Tate states, God is “the central focus” of Psalm 84 and the psalm is “noteworthy for its concentration of divine epithets” <sup>50</sup>. Therefore, addressing God as “our shield” accords with and adds to the variety of forms of reference to God in the psalm. The expression fits well within the prayer of vv. 9-10, which is the only part of the psalm where the poet petitions God for protection of the community represented by the anointed king.

In his structural analysis of Psalms 84–88, M. Fidanzio argues that the Korahite psalms (Psalms 84–85, 87–88) form a chiasmic structure with the

<sup>47</sup> BRETTLE, *God is King*, 46, 49, sees an ironic contrast between the powerless human shield in v. 10 and the divine shield on which it depends in v. 12. TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 36, also supports this interpretation on the grounds that “the king embodied and exercised the divine protective power”.

<sup>48</sup> A. WIIG, *Promise, Protection, and Prosperity*. Aspects of the “Shield” as a Religious Relational Metaphor in an Ancient Near Eastern Perspective. An Iconographical and Textual Analysis (LSHR 9; Lund 1999) 207-209.

<sup>49</sup> In contrast to the well-attested association of the sun with a deity in the ancient Near East, in the Hebrew Bible Ps 84,12 is the only place where God is identified with the sun. See WIIG, *Promise*, 206-207. According to TOURNAY, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms*, 154, “the roundness of the sun could have brought to mind a buckler, round like the *māgēn*”. However, the expression “our shield” in v. 10 has probably triggered the coordination of the “sun” with the “shield” in v. 12 due to their common round shape.

<sup>50</sup> TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 360-361.



Davidic psalm (Psalm 86) in the central position <sup>51</sup>. In this vein, Ps 84,9-10 could function as key verses in the first psalm of the collection that centers around David <sup>52</sup>. It is true that the leader of the community is in focus in the prayer. Yet there is no mention or insinuation of a king or priest in the early part of the psalm. When the audience/readers encounter the word “our shield” in v. 10, they do not postpone the search for its referent and wait until the last word of the verse, as Goldingay assumes <sup>53</sup>. Rather, they search for the antecedent of the expression. Immediately before the phrase מִגְנוֹ, God is called “the God of Jacob” at the end of v. 9. Then they come to realize that the expression מִגְנוֹ refers to no one other than “the God of Jacob”, which immediately precedes it. The personal name Jacob must have called to mind the communal character of the psalm and triggered the use of the first-person plural pronominal suffix here. Thus, the audience/readers find an appropriate antecedent for “our shield” in the context. They are less likely to associate מִגְנוֹ at the beginning of the verse with מְשִׁיחַךְ at its end.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Unlike the understanding of ancient translations such as the LXX and Vulgate, most modern translators and commentators understand the expression מִגְנוֹ in Ps 84,10 as referring to a royal person. The strongest argument for the identification has been the parallelism of the couplet that constitutes v. 10. However, both the syntactic usage of the two coordinated verbs of sight in the imperative and the vocative use of an appositive divine epithet preceding a divine name strengthen the case for taking מִגְנוֹ as a vocative referring to God. More importantly, the identical syntactic parallelism involving the “vocative–verb–object” structure along with the object gapping in both the couplets of vv. 9-10 lend support to this line of analysis. Furthermore, in Hebrew poetry neither a priest nor a king is identified as a shield, while God is often named metaphorically as a shield that offers help and protection. Therefore, “our shield” in v. 10 can best be analyzed as co-referential with the preceding noun

<sup>51</sup> M. FIDANZIO, “Composition des Psaumes 84–86”, *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. ZENGER) (BETL 238; Leuven 2010) 466. According to HAUGE, *Between Sheol and Temple*, 39, the prayer is “decisive for the understanding of the psalm as a whole”.

<sup>52</sup> FIDANZIO, “Composition”, 466 n. 4, links the prayer for the king in Psalm 84 with David’s prayer in Psalm 86. BOOIJ, “Psalm LXXXIV”, 440, describes the prayer in vv. 9-10 as “the central element of the text”.

<sup>53</sup> GOLDINGAY, *Psalms* 42–89, 596.

phrase “the God of Jacob” in v. 9. By calling upon God as “our shield”, the psalmist indicates his desperate need for protection and intervention from God.

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#### SUMMARY

The expression “our shield” in Ps 84,10 offers two possibilities of interpretation: taking the noun phrase as a vocative referring to the deity, or as an object of the imperative verb referring to a human king. The parallel structure of the two couplets that constitute the prayer in vv. 9-10 as well as syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features argue in favor of taking “our shield” as a reference to God. By calling God “our shield”, the poet prays for God’s powerful protection of the leader of the community, who is probably the poet himself.

## STYLE AND FAMILIARITY IN JUDGES 19,7 (OLD GREEK): ESTABLISHING DEPENDENCE WITHIN THE SEPTUAGINT

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible came to enjoy authority in certain diaspora Jewish communities. This development is apparent, for example, in the attitude expressed in the *Letter of Aristeas*<sup>1</sup>. The Pentateuch was indeed the first portion of the Hebrew Bible to be translated, probably in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E.<sup>2</sup> It went on to furnish an exemplar whose style and character significantly influenced both later translations of Hebrew scriptures and other Jewish literature, such as *Wisdom of Solomon* and the work of Ezekiel the Tragedian<sup>3</sup>. With this in mind, some recent studies have focused upon the intertextual links forged in the process of translation between the Greek Pentateuch and books of the Septuagint that were completed later<sup>4</sup>. The present study will follow a similar path of inquiry in the Book of Judges, whose Greek translator seems to have recognized the affinity between the parallel narratives of the hostile encounters in Judg 19,22-24 and Gen 19,4-8. In particular, we will identify and examine the imitation of a memorable expression from Old Greek [OG] Gen 19,7 in OG Judg 19,23, one that departs from both Hebrew source texts and shows sensitivity to Greek style and idiom<sup>5</sup>. That the OG

<sup>1</sup> A. AEJMELAEUS, "The Septuagint and Oral Translation", *XIV Congress of the IOSCS*. Helsinki, 2010 (ed. M.K.H. PETERS) (SBLSCS 59; Atlanta, GA 2013) 5-13, here 13.

<sup>2</sup> For linguistic evidence for this dating, see J.A.L. LEE, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch* (SCS 14; Chico, CA 1983) 139-44; T.V. EVANS, *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch*. Natural Greek Usage and Hebrew Interference (Oxford 2001) 263-264.

<sup>3</sup> Where we find both Septuagintal syntax and word-choice as well as more educated Greek. J.K. AITKEN, "The Language of the Septuagint and Jewish-Greek Identity", *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (eds. J.K. AITKEN – J. CARLETON PAGET) (Cambridge 2014) 120-134, here 134; cf. E. TOV, "The Impact of the Septuagint Translation of the Torah on the Translation of the Other Books", *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*. Collected Essays on the Septuagint (VTS 72; Leiden 1999) 183-194.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., M. THEOCHAROUS, *Lexical Dependence and Intertextual Allusion in the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets*. Studies in Hosea, Amos and Micah (LHBOTS 570; New York 2012), and studies noted on 5-7. I use "Septuagint" to refer generally to those books included within A. RAHLFS – R. HANHART (eds.), *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart 2006).

<sup>5</sup> In Septuagint scholarship it is common to see "LXX" before books of the Pentateuch to denote the Old Greek translation (e.g., LXX Genesis), but "OG" before the other books. For simplicity and clarity, however, I use "OG" before both Pentateuchal books and non-Pentateuchal books throughout this article.

translator of Judges chose to imitate OG Genesis indicates the influence of the Greek Pentateuch, perhaps here owing to its successful and memorable communication in Greek.

## II. THE SHARED LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE OF THE NARRATIVES

While one cannot be certain that Judges 19 was intentionally composed to bring Genesis 19 vividly to mind <sup>6</sup>, it has nevertheless done so for readers throughout history, including Pseudo-Philo (*L.A.B.* 45.2) and the medieval Jewish scholar, Ramban <sup>7</sup>. Many themes and a great deal of vocabulary are shared in Hebrew between Genesis 19 and Judges 19. In both texts, weary travelers come to an unfamiliar town and, after some uncertainty, meet hospitable locals willing to provide overnight accommodation. The travelers are thus spared from the less desirable option of sleeping in the town square (Gen 19,1-3; Judg 19,18-21). After dining together with their host, a dangerous group of “men of the city” (אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר) surround the hosts’ house (נִסְכָּרוֹ) and demand the guests for their own sexual purposes (Gen 19,4-5; Judg 19,22). In both narratives, the host pleads with his “brothers” (אָחִי) on behalf of his guests, asking that the men might not “act wickedly” (רָעָע), and then offers his daughter(s) as a substitute (Gen 19,6-8; Judg 19,23-24). From there the narratives differ significantly. In Genesis the host’s daughters are spared by divine intervention (Gen 19,9-11), while in Judges the traveler’s concubine (פְּלִגֶּשֶׁת) is turned over to the men of the city who brutally rape her to death (Judg 19,25) <sup>8</sup>.

Focusing specifically upon Gen 19,4-8 and Judg 19,22-24, we find an identical plotline in addition to the shared thematic and lexical elements mentioned above. In both Greek and Hebrew the story can be outlined as follows:

<i>Introduction</i>	Gen 19,4a	//	Judg 19,22a
<i>Rising Action</i>	Gen 19,4b-5a	//	Judg 19,22b
<i>Conflict</i>	Gen 19,5b-6	//	Judg 19,22c
<i>Climax</i>	Gen 19,7	//	Judg 19,23
<i>Resolution</i>	Gen 19,8	//	Judg 19,24

<sup>6</sup> So S. NIDITCH, “The ‘Sodomite’ Theme in Judges 19–20: Family, Community, and Social Distinction”, *CBQ* 44 (1982) 365-378; cf. V.H. MATTHEWS, “Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19”, *BTB* 22 (1992) 3-11.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in D.M. GUNN, *Judges Through the Centuries* (Malden, MA 2005) 244-246.

<sup>8</sup> See MATTHEWS, “Hospitality and Hostility” for a detailed comparison.

While this part of the narrative is itself embedded in larger literary structures, it is clearly framed in both versions around the climactic moment where the hosts exit their homes to intercede for their guests:

Gen 19,7        “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly” (NASB)

Judg 19,23     “No, my brothers, please do not act wickedly” (Author)

Framed within the narrative climax, this appeal issued by the hosts to the men of the city is the critical and, perhaps, most memorable moment in what have been aptly described as “texts of terror”<sup>9</sup>. Understandably, then, it is the translation of this precise climactic appeal in Genesis that, as shown below, is later imitated by the translator of Judges in his parallel text.

### III. CRITERIA FOR DISCERNING INTENTIONAL INNER-GREEK DEPENDENCE

Given the many points of confluence between these narratives in Hebrew<sup>10</sup>, it is unsurprising to find such similarities between the two Greek translations as well. In order to decide whether in fact the OG translator of Judges was influenced specifically by the Greek text of Genesis — and not by the Hebrew — and that he intentionally imitated it in his own Greek text, we will borrow and adapt the methodology of Robert Hanhart<sup>11</sup>. He states that “[t]he identity of the Greek rendering of the Hebrew *Vorlage* in statements which are identical in content but different in form is the only clear evidence of some literary dependence, evidence that [...] the translator of one statement knew the translation of another and used it as an authority”<sup>12</sup>. In other words, the most convincing cases of intentional, inner-Greek dependence are those with (1) two identical Greek renderings whose respective Hebrew source texts (2) say the same

<sup>9</sup> P. TRIBLE, *Texts of Terror*. Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives (OBT 13; Philadelphia, PA 1984) 65-91. Tribble recognizes the overt parallels of Judges 19 with Genesis 19, and how the former evokes the “terrible memories” of the latter (74-76).

<sup>10</sup> The Hebrew texts contain nearly exactly the same number of words (~69), about a quarter of which are morphologically identical, with many other phrases that are different only for contextual and grammatical reasons. See C.F. BURNEY, *The Book of Judges* (New York 1970) 444-445; D.I. BLOCK, *Judges, Ruth*. An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (NAC 6; Nashville, TN 1999) 532-534.

<sup>11</sup> R. HANHART, “The Translation of the Septuagint in Light of Earlier Tradition and Subsequent Influences”, *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings*. Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Septuagint and its Relations to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Writings. Manchester, 1990 (eds. G.J. BROOKE – B. LINDARS) (SBLSCS 33; Atlanta, GA 1992) 339-379.

<sup>12</sup> HANHART, “Translation”, 359.

thing but (3) in different ways <sup>13</sup>. To this I would add that the Greek translations must (4) differ in one or more ways from their respective Hebrew *Vorlagen* (see Fig. 1).

<i>Criterion 1:</i>	Hebrew phrases identical to each other in <i>content</i>
<i>Criterion 2:</i>	Hebrew phrases different from each other in <i>form</i>
<i>Criterion 3:</i>	Greek phrases are identical to each other in <i>form</i> and <i>content</i>
<i>Criterion 4:</i>	Greek phrases differ somehow from both Hebrew source texts

*Fig. 1 – Hanhart’s Modified Criteria*

My Criterion 4 may be implicit in Hanhart’s statement given above, but it is unclear. His statement that the Hebrew *Vorlagen* should be “different in form” could mean either different *from each other* (Hebrew-Hebrew difference), or different *from the Greek renderings* (Hebrew-Greek difference). If Hanhart did not mean both, then I wish to specify that demonstrating both kinds of difference further strengthens the case for intentional, inner-Greek dependence of a later translator on an earlier text.

Of course, whether or not a set of texts meets these criteria is a matter of degree. For example, two phrases that differ in form (grammar) may be more or less identical in content (meaning). As a result, the case for intentional, inner-Greek dependence becomes stronger the more demonstrably each criterion is met. Moreover, the success of these criteria hinge upon the reliability of our reconstructed texts. For this reason, the most compelling cases of intentional, inner-Greek dependence will be drawn from the best editions available for all Hebrew and Greek texts <sup>14</sup>.

#### IV. THE OLD GREEK TEXTS

While the OG translation of Genesis has been sufficiently reconstructed by J.W. Wevers, no Göttingen volume yet exists for the Book of Judges <sup>15</sup>. Consequently, I have reconstructed OG Judg 19,22-24 by building upon

<sup>13</sup> Cf. C. DOGNEZ, “L’intertextualité dans la LXX de Zacharie 9–14”, *Interpreting Translation. Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (eds. F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – M. VERVENNE) (BETL 192; Leuven 2005) 81-96, here 82-83.

<sup>14</sup> For Hebrew I have used A. TAL (ed.), *Genesis* (BHQ 1; Stuttgart 2016) and N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS (ed.), *Judges* (BHQ 7; Stuttgart 2011). For Greek see below.

<sup>15</sup> J.W. WEVERS (ed.), *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Vol. I: Genesis* (Göttingen 1974).

the text-critical conclusions of others <sup>16</sup>. OG Judges is best preserved in the AII group of witnesses, which consists of the subgroups KZgln(o)w and (d)ptv, particularly when it is supported by the pre-Hexaplaric Old Latin version. Although my reconstruction must remain provisional until the Göttingen edition appears, it has benefitted from the input of others and provides a working model for this study <sup>17</sup>. The OG texts are provided in Figure 2 below. The phrase taken up from OG Genesis by the translator of OG Judges — the most important reconstruction in this study — is in boldface.

<i>OG Gen 19,4-8 (Göttingen)</i>	<i>OG Judg 19,22-24 (Reconstruction)</i>
<p>4 καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως οἱ Σοδομίται περιεκύκλωσαν τὴν οἰκίαν ἀπὸ νεανίσκου ἕως πρεσβυτέρου, ἅπας ὁ λαὸς ἅμα, <b>5</b> καὶ ἐξεκαλοῦντο τὸν Λώτ, καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς αὐτόν Ποῦ εἰσιν οἱ ἄνδρες οἱ εἰσελθόντες πρὸς σὲ τὴν νύκτα; ἐξάγαγε αὐτοὺς πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἵνα συγγενώμεθα αὐτοῖς.</p> <p>6 ἐξῆλθεν δὲ Λώτ πρὸς αὐτοὺς πρὸς τὸ πρόθυρον, τὴν δὲ θύραν προσέφωξεν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ. <b>7</b> εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς <b>Μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μὴ πονηρεύσθε.</b></p> <p><b>8</b> εἰσὶν δέ μοι δύο θυγατέρες, αἱ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν ἄνδρα· ἐξάξω αὐτάς πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ χρῆσασθε αὐταῖς, καθὰ ἂν ἀρέσκη ὑμῖν· μόνον εἰς τοὺς ἄνδρας τούτους μὴ ποιήσητε μηδὲν ἄδικον, οὗ εἵνεκεν εἰσηλθὼν ὑπὸ τὴν σκέπην τῶν δοκῶν μου.</p>	<p>22 αὐτῶν δὲ ἀγαθυνθέντων, καὶ ἰδοὺ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως υἱοὶ παρανόμων περιεκύκλωσαν τὸν οἶκον καὶ ἐκρουον τὴν θύραν, καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν κύριον τῆς οἰκίας τὸν πρεσβύτερον Ἐξάγαγε τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν εἰσελθόντα εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν σου, ἵνα γνῶμεν αὐτόν.</p> <p>23 καὶ ἐξῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ κύριος τῆς οἰκίας καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς <b>Μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μὴ πονηρεύεσθε</b> καὶ μὴ ποιήσητε τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην· μετὰ τὸ εἰσεληλυθῆναι τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν μου μὴ ποιήσητε τὴν ἀφροσύνην ταύτην.</p> <p>24 ἰδοὺ δὴ ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἡ παρθένος καὶ ἡ παλλακὴ αὐτοῦ· ἐξαγάγω δὴ αὐτάς, καὶ ταπεινώσατε αὐτάς καὶ ποιήσατε αὐταῖς ὥς ἂν ἀρέσκη ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν· καὶ τῷ ἀνδρὶ τούτῳ μὴ ποιήσητε τὸ πρᾶγμα τῆς ἀφροσύνης ταύτης.</p>

Fig. 2 – Old Greek Texts

<sup>16</sup> Using the textual evidence provided in A.E. BROOKE – N. McLEAN (eds.), *The Old Testament in Greek*. Vol. 1: *The Octateuch*. Part IV: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Cambridge 1917). For a synopsis of the complicated textual history of this book, see P.E. SATTERTHWAITE, “Judges”, *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (ed. J.K. AITKEN) (New York 2015) 102-117, here 102-105; S. KREUZER, *Kritik. Einleitung*. Vol. I: *Genesis bis Makkabäer* (Stuttgart 2011) 657-700, here 658-661; N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS – M.V. SPOTTORNO DÍAZ-CARO (eds.), *La Biblia Griega Septuaginta*. Vol. II: *Libros Históricos* (BEB 126; Salamanca 2011) 79-82.

<sup>17</sup> My thanks in particular to Dr. José Manuel Cañas Reillo, currently producing the Göttingen edition of Judges, and Drs. John A.L. Lee and Natalio Fernández Marcos for their helpful input. I also offer thanks to Dr. Philip E. Satterthwaite for his excellent work in LXX Judges, and for our profitable conversations about the textual evidence at Tyndale House, Cambridge.



V. MEETING HANHART’S MODIFIED CRITERIA

Working through the logic for criteria demonstrating inner-Greek dependence can certainly prove challenging. Once established, however, these criteria are more easily applied to a given set of texts.

1. *Criteria #1 & 2: Same Content but Different Form in Hebrew*

It is not difficult to see how the two hosts’ appeals in Gen 19,7 and Judg 19,23 differ in form in the Hebrew, if only slightly. This is shown in Figure 3.

Gen 19,7	אל-נא אחי תרעו	“Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly” (NASB)
Judg 19,23	אל-אחי אל-תרעו נא	“No, my brothers, please do not act wickedly” (Author)

Fig. 3 – The Differing Form but Identical Content of the Hebrew

The enclitic particle נא immediately follows the negative אל in Gen 19,7, but in Judg 19,23 נא follows the verb and there are two negatives in the phrase. There are no relevant textual variants in either Hebrew text. Despite their differing forms, however, it is equally clear that they are identical in content, as reflected in the translations provided. This is due in large part to the identical lexical items and morphology employed in each text. The two appeals thus amount to saying the same thing despite their syntactical differences <sup>18</sup>.

2. *Criterion #3: Identical Greek Translations*

As given above, the OG translations of each of these Hebrew phrases are almost identical (Fig. 4). Moreover, because these texts meet Criteria 1–2 — having the same content but different forms in Hebrew — it is highly improbable that these renderings merely arose from a similar translation technique. The only difference between the two Greek phrases is the verbal morphology, which shifts from the aorist subjunctive in OG Genesis to the present imperative in OG Judges.

<sup>18</sup> This is not to say there are no semantic differences whatsoever, of course, only that those differences are insignificant.

Gen 19,7	μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μὴ πονηρεύσησθε
Judg 19,23	μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μὴ πονηρεύεσθε <sup>19</sup>

Fig. 4 – Near Identical Greek Renderings

As mentioned above, meeting any criterion is a matter of degree, and here the difference between the Greek renderings is very slight. While the change in aspect portrays the verbal action differently, the semantic effect of the phrase as a negative prohibition is the same <sup>20</sup>. Thus, this difference in form amounts to virtually no difference in content. While just short of being identical in every respect, these two Greek renderings nevertheless satisfactorily meet this criterion <sup>21</sup>.

### 3. Criterion #4: Greek Translation Differs from Both Hebrew Texts

The final criterion significantly strengthens the case for intentional, inner-Greek dependence of a later translator upon an earlier text. But demonstrating conclusively that a Greek translation diverged from its Hebrew source — and does not instead preserve a variant reading — can be difficult. As mentioned above, no relevant variants exist in the textual evidence for either Gen 19,7 or Judg 19,23 in Hebrew. Yet it is still possible to infer, to some degree, that the OG preserves a variant for which there is no extant evidence.

Yet reconstructing an alternative *Vorlage* from a Septuagint reading without textual support is a notoriously difficult and inevitably subjective undertaking <sup>22</sup>. By comparison, the possibility of an unattested Hebrew variant does not prevent us from working confidently with the evidence actually at hand. Failing to do so is to fall sway to an argument from text-critical silence. With regard to OG Judg 19,23, in particular, considering both the extensive overlap in general between Gen 19,4 and Judg 19,23

<sup>19</sup> μηδαμῶς (Z glnow + ptv and OL) ἀδελφοί (Zglnow + dptv and OL) μὴ (glnw + dptv) πονηρεύεσθε (Z glnow + ptv). Omit δὲ (Zglnow + ptv).

<sup>20</sup> The issue of aspect in this construction is raised in J.H. MOULTON, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 1: *Prolegomena* (Edinburgh <sup>3</sup>1908) 122-126, 173-174. On 173 he notes that the prohibitive purpose of the subjunctive and imperative moods “hardly differ”. Also see T. MURAOKA, *A Syntax of Septuagint Greek* (Leuven 2016) §28ha(iii), 29ba(ii); H.W. SMYTH, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA 1920) §§ 1800, 1840.

<sup>21</sup> Presumably attesting a later change to OG Judg 19,23, Codex A and some cursives read πονηρεύσῃσθε, thus making the renderings identical.

<sup>22</sup> Tov maintains that such a reconstruction should be a last resort, and believes “the majority” of deviations from MT in the LXX arise from the translation technique or inner-Greek developments. E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Winona Lake, IN <sup>3</sup>2015) 44, 49.

and the lack of textual variants in the Hebrew, it is certainly the more cautious option to attribute the divergence between the Greek and Hebrew texts to the very inner-Greek influence under discussion.

The trends and habits exhibited in the translation of the OG texts of Genesis and Judges point in the same direction. It is the typical approach of the translators of both Genesis and Judges to render their *Vorlagen* into a Greek version that closely corresponds to the syntax of the Hebrew. That is to say, both translators typically produce a target text with consistent fidelity to the word-order of their source texts. However, that approach is not completely uniform, since in both Greek versions the translators occasionally depart from their *Vorlagen* in favor of conventional Greek idiom<sup>23</sup>. So although the renderings that diverge from their source texts in both OG Gen 19,4 and OG Judg 19,23 are somewhat exceptional with respect to the tendencies of their translators, this is by no means firm ground upon which to reconstruct alternative *Vorlagen*.

Therefore, it seems safe to say that the verses under investigation meet the fourth and final criterion for determining intentional, inner-Greek dependence. The nearly identical Greek translations diverge from both Hebrew texts rendered. Moreover, they do so in two ways, namely in syntax and in modality. To address syntax first, in OG Gen 19,7 the translator has omitted several elements in his Greek rendering (Fig. 5).

	Gen 19,7	אל-נא אחי תרעו
Possible Translation	μή δὲ, ἀδελφοί μου, πονηρεύσησθε	
Actual Translation	μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μή πονηρεύσησθε	
	Judg 19,23	אל-אחי אל-תרעו נא
Possible Translation	μή, ἀδελφοί μου, μή πονηρεύσησθε δὴ	
Actual Translation	μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μή πονηρεύεσθε	

Fig. 5 – The Identical Greek Translations Differing from Both Hebrew Texts

The OG Genesis translator does not translate the Hebrew, for example, with μή δὲ, ἀδελφοί μου, πονηρεύσησθε, which would preserve

<sup>23</sup> For discussion of the translation techniques, see M.W. SCARLATA, “Genesis”, *Companion to the Septuagint*, 13-28; R. HIEBERT, “Genesis”, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (eds., A. PIETERSMA – B.G. WRIGHT) (Oxford 2007) 1-42; J.W. WEVERS, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBLSCS 35; Atlanta, GA 1993) xiii, xv, 268; SATTERTHWAITE, “Judges”, 107-113; P. HARLÉ, *Les Juges*. Traduction des textes grecs de la Septante, introduction et notes (BdA 7; Paris 1999) 35-38.

word-for-word syntactic correspondence. Rather, he varies the syntax of his target text and also omits an equivalent to the Hebrew pronoun suffix. Likewise, in OG Judg 19,23 the translator declines to represent his source text isomorphically, although he might have rendered it with μή, ἀδελφοί μου, μή πονηρεύσησθε δὴ, for example. Rather, the syntax once again varies, and the possessive pronoun is absent. In sum, the nearly identical Greek translation in OG Gen 19,7 and OG Judg 19,23 differs from both Hebrew source texts in form, despite the straightforward options for syntactic conformity in translation <sup>24</sup>.

Secondly, the shared Greek translation differs also in tone from the Hebrew source texts. The Hebrew particle אַנִּי is known as the precative particle <sup>25</sup>, and usually adds a “weak entreating nuance, roughly equivalent to a stressed and lengthened ‘please’ in English” <sup>26</sup>. It is often paired with the jussive form and לֹא to express negative volition, best construed as a “polite request” <sup>27</sup>. The grammar of the two Hebrew phrases in Gen 19,7 and Judg 19,23 thus constitutes a deferential appeal by the host to the hostile “men of the city”. However, while the tone of the Hebrew texts is, like their content, identical, the tone of their Greek translation is quite different. The adverb μηδαμῶς is ordinarily used “as a strong neg[ative]” <sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, as noted above, the μή + aorist subjunctive and μή + present imperative constructions both convey negative prohibition, not negative volition as in the Hebrew <sup>29</sup>. Thus in Greek the action is roundly forbidden by the hosts, and so we might translate both phrases: “Certainly not, brothers, you must not do evil!” <sup>30</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Even if one were to postulate that these Greek renderings reflect the word order of a different *Vorlage*, that word order could have been translated with a variety of Greek negative constructions. In fact, that is precisely what we see in the differing choices: to employ μή + subjunctive in OG Genesis, or μή + imperative in OG Judges. In both cases, the Greek verbal morphology differs from the Hebrew Hiphil imperfect form.

<sup>25</sup> *IBHS* §34.7a

<sup>26</sup> *Joüon* §105c.

<sup>27</sup> C.H.J. VAN DER MERWE – J.A. NAUDÉ – J.H. KROEZE, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (BLH 3; Sheffield 1999) 150.

<sup>28</sup> μηδαμῶς, *LSJ*, 1125; cf. T. MURAOKA, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven 2009) 459; A. BAILLY – L. SÉCHAN – P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire Grec Français* (Paris 1950) 1274; F. MONTANARI – M. GOH – C. SCHROEDER, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek* (Leiden 2015) 1339.

<sup>29</sup> “[A]lmost always to prevent a forbidden action [from] beginning”. μή, *BDAG*, 646.1.c.ε.κ; cf. *LSJ*, 1123.A.2.b. See MOULTON, *Grammar*, 122-26 for a discussion of the two constructions.

<sup>30</sup> Wevers notes that the Hebrew expression “my brothers” (אֶחָיו) is placatory and is still used that way in the Middle East. It may be that the translator of Genesis, knowing this, removed the suffix in accordance with the change of tone towards prohibitive command. WEVERS, *Notes*, 269.

#### 4. *Summary*

These phrases in Gen 19,7 and Judg 19,23 and their OG translations are a clear example of texts that meet Hanhart's criteria for discerning intentional, inner-Greek dependence. With the addition of Criterion 4, the possibility that the OG translator of Judges was influenced by the Hebrew text of Genesis, rather than its translation, becomes exceedingly small. This is especially so since the nearly identical Greek translations differ from the Hebrew source texts not only in form but also in tone. Moreover, on account of meeting this fourth criterion, the Greek cannot be explained by a common translation approach of the two translators, especially considering their general tendencies towards word-for-word fidelity to their *Vorlagen*. It is therefore all the more likely to be the intentional imitation of OG Genesis by the later translator of Judges. Given our knowledge of the chronology of the Septuagint's production, we may therefore say that the translator of OG Judges apparently knew OG Genesis and, discerning the literary parallel, chose to imitate it at the same climactic moment in the Judges narrative.

### VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON FAMILIARITY AND STYLE

It is not only the intentional imitation of OG Genesis by the Judges translator that is of note. As mentioned above, the translator of Genesis generally maintained close lexical and syntactic representation of his *Vorlage*, diverging from it usually where the Hebrew was difficult. But his translation was not rigid<sup>31</sup>. Stylistic and interpretive elements are also present in various places, as we have seen in the translation of the host's appeal in OG Gen 19,7. Moreover, the translation μηδαμῶς, ἀδελφοί, μὴ πονηρεύσῃσθε/πονηρεύεσθε is not only natural Greek, but it is an educated use of the language. Similar prohibitive constructions combined with μηδαμῶς appear occasionally in Classical works<sup>32</sup>, but they are infrequent in Koine literature, where μηδαμῶς is quite uncommon<sup>33</sup>. In the non-literary Koine documentary evidence, μηδαμῶς is also sparsely

<sup>31</sup> See SCARLATA, "Genesis", 13-15, 16-20. Cf. WEVERS, *Notes*, 268.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., Plato, *Leg.* 771.e.4; 778.a.1; *Charm.* 175.5; Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 714; *Vesp.* 371; *Ach.* 334; Sophocles, *Phil.* 1300; *Aj.* 1334; Demosthenes, *Lept.* 159.1; 222.5; *I Boeot.* 36.2; Theophrastus, *Caus. plant.* 2.17.3.

<sup>33</sup> Only appearing in Polybius twice (*Hist.* 2.33.5; 12.4a.6) and once in Philo Mechanicus (*Parasc.* 82.36), compared to thousands of occurrences in Classical sources. In the Septuagint μηδαμῶς appears 20x, mostly in the historical books and in non-translation books.

attested, suggesting that the word was not used frequently in vernacular speech<sup>34</sup>. In contrast, the use of μηδαμῶς by Josephus (7×), known for his pseudo-classicism, indicates that he understood the word as elevated Greek<sup>35</sup>. The use of μηδαμῶς in OG Genesis, then, demonstrates that the translator had some understanding of Greek style and employed it at least occasionally, a feature that others have also identified in other parts of the translation<sup>36</sup>. In OG Gen 19,7, then, the translator chose to employ a conventional and more educated variety of Greek rather than represent his source text isomorphically. The decision in favor of this well-formed Greek idiom may have been a product of his interpretation of the context: the host's exchange with the men of the city — intensified in Greek from polite request to stern prohibition — constitutes the narrative climax.

Although it appears certain that the translator of Judges has intentionally imitated OG Gen 19,7 in OG Judg 19,23, he did not necessarily have the same reasons for departing from his *Vorlage*, nor the same competency in Greek as the Genesis translator<sup>37</sup>. Speaking of the origins of the Septuagint, James Carleton Paget proposes that “if Lagarde and others are right, then we have to assume that the LXX translation almost immediately acquired a good deal of authority, perhaps owing to the translation being

<sup>34</sup> There is only one full attestation in inscriptions: IG IX 1 694.II.108 (229 BCE). Other examples can be found in several partially or completely reconstructed inscriptions: e.g., FD 3.2 243 [TM 43922] (c. 150 BCE); IMauer 1.204 57 (early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE); LSCG 156, I (4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE). There are also six instances in papyri prior to the turn of the era: *P.Tebt.* 1.24.5 [TM 3660] (117 BCE); *UPZ* 2.162.8.28-29 [TM 3563] (117 BCE); *BGU* 8.1823.21 [TM 4902] (60-55 BCE); *P.Rev* 16.14 [TM 8859] (259/8 BCE); *UPZ* 2.161.63 [TM 3562] (119 BCE); *UPZ* 1.79.8 [TM 3470] (159 BCE), some of which are fragmentary and uncertain. On the alternative spelling μηθαμῶς, see E. MAYSER, *Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit*. Vol. 1.1 (Berlin 1923) 180-182.

<sup>35</sup> See A. PELLETIER, *Flavius Josèphe, adaptateur de la Lettre d'Aristée*. Une réaction atticisme contre la Koinè (EC 45; Paris 1962), cited in G.H.R. HORSLEY, “The Fiction of ‘Jewish Greek’”, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. Vol. 5: *Linguistic Essays* (ed. G.H.R. HORSLEY) (North Ryde, N.S.W. 1989) 33-34. On Atticism see J.A.L. LEE, “The Atticist Grammarians”, *The Language of the New Testament*. Context, History and Development (eds. S.E. PORTER – A.W. PITTS) (EHC 3; Leiden 2013) 283-308.

<sup>36</sup> Aitken describes the Greek of the Septuagint as “eclectic”, including both contemporary vernacular Koine as well as higher literary features in the translation of Genesis. J.K. AITKEN, “Language of the Septuagint”, 127-132, here 130.

<sup>37</sup> See, however, P.E. SATTERTHWAITE, “Judges”, 107, who suggests that the translator “clearly had a better command of Greek than usually emerges from his translation”. In contrast, H.ST.J. THACKERAY, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint*. Vol. 1: *Introduction, Orthography and Accidence* (Cambridge 1909) 13, calls Judges one of the “literal or unintelligent versions”. See also N. FERNÁNDEZ-MARCOS, “The Septuagint Reading of the Samson Cycle”, *Samson: Hero or Fool? The Many Faces of Samson* (eds. E. EYNIKEL – T. NICKLAS) (TBN 17; Leiden 2014) 87-99. Imitation of an older translation need not have occurred with a physical Greek manuscript in front of the later translator, since it could also have arisen from oral translation or the translator's memory/knowledge of, in this case, the Greek Pentateuch.

sanctioned by the Jewish community at large, or certainly by some of its now forgotten leaders”<sup>38</sup>. Working at least a century after the translation of the Greek Pentateuch, the inclination of the Judges translator towards imitation may have derived from his familiarity with OG Genesis, in particular, and the authority of the Greek Pentateuch within his community, in general<sup>39</sup>. Put another way, it appears, at least in this case, that familiarity with OG Genesis exerted enough influence upon a later Septuagint translator for him to depart from his Hebrew *Vorlage*, perhaps aided by its successful and memorable communication in Greek. By imitating the prohibition from OG Gen 19,7 in OG Judg 19,23, the translator of Judges bypasses a possible word-for-word rendering of his Hebrew text in favor of what was likely a well-known, educated Greek phrase from the parallel narrative in Genesis<sup>40</sup>. In doing so the translator of Judges both interprets and more closely connects the narrative in 19,22-24 with its literary parallel in Genesis, as Pseudo-Philo does a few centuries later (*L.A.B.* 45.2).

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#### SUMMARY

This article develops and applies criteria to determine intentional, inner-Greek dependence in the Septuagint, using the parallel narratives in Genesis 19 and Judges 19 as an example. The OG translator of Judges is familiar with and imitates a Greek rendering from OG Genesis 19,7 at the point where the narratives converge. The Genesis translator demonstrates both his occasional preference for Greek idiom over word-for-word translation, as well as competency in Greek style. In turn, the Judges translator demonstrates how the language of the Greek Pentateuch occasionally exerts greater influence than that of his Hebrew *Vorlage*.

<sup>38</sup> “The Origins of the Septuagint”, *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (eds. J.K. AITKEN – J. CARLETON PAGET) (Cambridge 2014) 105-119, here 117.

<sup>39</sup> Other aspects of OG Judg 19,22-24 also indicate familiarity with the Greek Pentateuch, e.g., υἱοὶ παπανόμων translating אֲנָשִׁי בְנֵי-בִלְעֵל in 19,22, similar to OG Deut 13,14.

<sup>40</sup> Notably, a later revision of OG Judg 19,23 in the B Group, associated with the Kaige revision, changes the wording of the host’s direct speech to μή ἀδελφοί μή κακοποιήσητε δῆ, thus representing the Hebrew isomorphically. The first μή is substituted for μηδαμῶς only in B defjqs + iru, and κακοποιέω + δῆ appears in B defjqs + irua<sub>2</sub>. Two B Group cursives also preserve the Hebrew pronoun suffix by adding μου (oq).



## MATTHEW 18,1-14 AND THE EXPOSURE AND SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN IN THE ROMAN WORLD

Matthew 18 contains a lengthy discourse that addresses the need for proper relationships within the Matthean community. While Matt 18,15-34 addresses the need to confront and restore the errant disciple, Matt 18,1-14 intends to prevent the disciple from erring. Matt 18,1-5 portrays the humility of a child (παιδίον) as greatness in the kingdom, which is a character trait the disciples must emulate by welcoming (δέχονται) others. Matt 18,6-9 provides eschatological warnings against the disciple who causes other disciples (described as “one of these little ones who believe in me”) to stumble in their faith (σκανδαλίζω). Matt 18,10-14, the parable of the lost sheep, displays God’s concern for the errant disciple (“one of these little ones”) who has stumbled in their faith and been led astray from God. Numerous commentators have arrived at this common interpretation that addresses spiritual failure within the Matthean community<sup>1</sup>. This interpretation is entirely coherent; however, significant parallels with other ancient texts suggest that another avenue of interpretation is possible, which addresses ethical atrocities that were prevalent within the Roman world. This paper will argue that Matt 18,1-14 is concerned with the welfare of children (παιδίον = “one of these little ones”), and Jesus presents eschatological warnings of divine retribution against any disciple who scandalizes (σκανδαλίζω) children through sexual abuse or exposure, rather than welcoming (δέχονται) them and providing for their needs.

<sup>1</sup> A.H. M’NEILE, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London 1915) 259-265; M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Matthieu* (Paris 1927) 344-353; J. SCHMID, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Regensburg 1959) 266-271; W.G. THOMPSON, *Matthew’s Advice to a Divided Community*. Mt. 17,22 – 18,35 (AnBib 44; Rome 1970) 69-174; W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew* (AB 26; Garden City, NY 1971) 215-219; R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew. A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, MI 1982) 358-367; W.D. DAVIES – D.C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew, Volume 2* (ICC; Edinburgh 1991) 752-780; D.J. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SacPag 1; Collegeville, MN 1991) 263-267; D.A. HAGNER, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33b; Grand Rapids, MI 1995) 514-528; U. LUZ, *Matthew 8–20* (trans. J.E. CROUCH) (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2001) 423-446; J. NOLLAND, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NIGTC; Cambridge 2005) 729-743; R.T. FRANCE, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 672-689; D.L. TURNER, *Matthew* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2008) 433-441; C.S. KEENER, *The Gospel of Matthew. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Cambridge 2009) 447-452; G.R. OSBORNE, *Matthew* (ZECNT 1; Grand Rapids, MI 2010) 666-682.

I. THE CHILD (παιδίον) AND THE IDENTITY OF  
“ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES”

In response to the disciples’ question about “the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”, Jesus calls a “child” (παιδίον) to stand in their midst and presents this child as an object lesson for the disciples (18,1-4). Entrance into the kingdom of heaven is dependent on turning and becoming “like children (ὡς τὰ παιδιά)”. Children represent humility, and this character trait must be emulated, since whoever humbles himself “like this child (ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο)” will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Despite the comparison (ὡς) with children in general, there is no change of scene, and an actual child (τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο) remains standing in their midst throughout the following discourse.

The discussion now changes from the character of children (18,1-4), to positive and negative actions directed towards children (18,5-10). The positive action is to extend hospitality: “Whoever welcomes one such child (καὶ ὃς ἐὰν δέξηται ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο) in my name, welcomes me” (18,5). The negative action is to scandalize: “But whoever scandalizes one of these little ones who believe in me (ὃς δ’ ἂν σκανδαλίσῃ ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ)” (18,6).

The common interpretation suggests that a transition occurs between 18,5 and 18,6, where Jesus proceeds from a discussion about literal children in 18,5 to a discussion about a figurative type of disciple in 18,6<sup>2</sup>. This is understandable since children are depicted as model disciples, yet the parallel grammatical structure and word-order in the relative clauses and their objects appear to correlate the “child” and the “little ones”:

Matt 18,5: ὃς ἐὰν δέξηται  
ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο

Matt 18,6: ὃς δ’ ἂν σκανδαλίσῃ  
ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ

<sup>2</sup> Matt 10,40-42 contains a parallel which correlates “welcoming” (δέχομαι) the disciples with welcoming Jesus. However, the context of Matthew 10 is clearly different from Matthew 18, since there is no actual child present, and so “one of these little ones” must be interpreted figuratively. For those who see a literal child in view for Matt 18,6, see W.C. ALLEN, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (ICC 25; Edinburgh 1907) 194-196; and for the parallel in Mark 9,42, see: R.H. GUNDRY, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI 1993) 524; C.A. EVANS, *Mark 8:27 – 16:20* (WBC 34b; Grand Rapids, MI 1988) 70; A. YARBRO COLLINS, *Mark* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2007) 450; W.R.G. LOADER, *The New Testament on Sexuality* (Cambridge 2012) 121.

Based on these parallels, William G. Thompson has accurately concluded that “the corresponding objects [‘one such child’ (v. 5a) . . . one of these little ones who believe in me (v. 6a)] must be somewhat synonymous, or else the opposition would lose its meaning”<sup>3</sup>. If the literal child from 18,1-4 is in view in 18,5 and correlated with “one of these little ones who believe in me” in 18,6, then the opposition (δέ) depicted in 18,5-6 is between “welcoming” (δέχομαι) and “scandalizing” (σκανδαλίζω) a literal child.

## II. THE TERM σκανδαλίζω AS SEXUAL ABUSE

There are numerous difficulties with translating and interpreting σκανδαλίζω in Matt 18,6-9. Popular English translations of the clause ὃς δ’ ἂν σκανδαλίσῃ ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ (18,6) are in general agreement that σκανδαλίζω has a causative effect which results in the detriment of “one of these little ones” by entangling them in the action: “But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin” (*NET*; *ESV*; *NKJV*; *RSV*; *NAB*), or “[...] to stumble” (*ASV*; *NASB*; *NIV*). This is somewhat problematic because it implies that “one of these little ones” is culpable for the action committed against them (they “sin” or “stumble”), and it mitigates the frightful pronouncements directed against the perpetrator in this pericope. Perhaps a better translation of σκανδαλίζω in 18,6 is simply an English transliteration: “Whoever scandalizes one of these little ones who believe in me”<sup>4</sup>. This maintains that the agent of the scandal is the perpetrator, and the action is committed against the child.

### 1. Matt 18,6-9 and Matt 5,27-30

There are only a few examples of the verb σκανδαλίζω used outside the NT (Sir 9,5; 23,8; 32,15; *Pss. Sol.* 16,7), and the occurrence of the

<sup>3</sup> THOMPSON, *Matthew’s Advice*, 105. Despite this claim, Thompson still argues that a literal child may not be in view, but rather both objects are representative of fellow-disciples. His argument appears to make the unwarranted assumption that a little one “who believes in me” cannot be a παιδίον, when early Christian texts note the prominence of children in worship, initially with infant baptism and the Eucharist, followed by participation in worship. See further: O.M. BAKKE, *When Children Became People. The Birth of Childhood in Early Christianity* (trans. B. McNEIL) (Minneapolis, MN 2005) 223-259; C.B. HORN – J.W. MARTENS, “Let the little children come to me”. Childhood and Children in Early Christianity (Washington, DC 2009) 252-300. The indication that the child is a believer simply specifies the ecclesial context of this discourse, which continues in 18,15-34.

<sup>4</sup> Douay-Rheims translation (1899) maintains “scandalize”.

active form in the NT is quite rare <sup>5</sup>. In its most basic sense, σκανδαλίζω is a sin or ethical offense, although the context must determine the actual sin or ethical offense that is in view <sup>6</sup>. The common interpretation of Matt 18,6 argues that σκανδαλίζω means causing a fellow-disciple to lose their faith. However, *Pss. Sol.* 16,7, the first text prior to the NT to use the active form of σκανδαλίζω, indicates that this term is used in the context of sexual sin: “Restrain me, O God, from sexual sin, and from every evil woman who scandalizes the foolish” (ἐπικράτησόν μου ὁ θεός ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας πονηρᾶς καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης γυναικὸς πονηρᾶς σκανδαλιζούσης ἄφρονα). The interpretation of σκανδαλίζω in Matt 5,29-30 is also clear. The source of scandal is the “right eye” (εἰ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ὁ δεξιὸς σκανδαλίζει σε) or “right hand” (καὶ εἰ ἡ δεξιὰ σου χεὶρ σκανδαλίζει σε), and the action is committed against a “woman” (γυνή) (5,28). The context indicates that the scandal is sexual sin, namely “adultery” (μοιχεύω).

The strongest argument that the σκανδαλίζω refers to sexual sin is the clear parallels between the excision statements in Matt 5,29-30 and Matt 18,8-9. If Matthew is following Mark 9,43-48 at this point (which is likely), he has redacted the statements to align with Matt 5,29-30.

While Mark 9,42-48 has three excision statements (“hand”, “foot”, “eye”), Matthew has two: “hand and foot” are paired in 18,8, and “eye” in 18,9. Mark indicates that the hand and foot are to be “chopped off” (ἀποκόπτω) in 9,43.45, but Matt 18,8 heightens the seriousness of the offending member by indicating that you are to “cut it off and throw it from you (ἔκκοπον αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ)”, which parallels Matt 5,30.

Matt 18,8: Εἰ δὲ ἡ χεὶρ σου ἢ ὁ πούς σου σκανδαλίζει σε,  
ἔκκοπον αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ

Matt 5,30: καὶ εἰ ἡ δεξιὰ σου χεὶρ σκανδαλίζει σε,  
ἔκκοπον αὐτὴν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ

The parallel statements concerning the excision of the “eye” are almost exact.

Matt 18,9: καὶ εἰ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου σκανδαλίζει σε,  
ἔξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ

Matt 5,29: εἰ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ὁ δεξιὸς σκανδαλίζει σε,  
ἔξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ

<sup>5</sup> Matt 5,29-30; 17,27; 18,6.8.9 (Mark 9,42.43.45.47; Luke 17,2); John 6,61; 1 Cor 8,13 (2x).

<sup>6</sup> G. STÄHLIN, *Skandalon. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte eines biblischen Begriffs* (BFCT 24; München 1930) 265-270; BDAG, 752; LSJ, 1604b; PGL, 1235b; TDNT, 7.351.

Instead of following Mark 9,47 with the verb ἐκβάλλω, Matthew uses ἐξαιρέω in 18,9; the only other occurrence of ἐξαιρέω in Matthew is in 5,29. As in Matt 18,8 and 5,30, Matt 18,9 and 5,29 indicate that you are to “throw it from you (βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ)”.

The use of the active form of σκανδαλίζω in *Pss. Sol.* 16.7 and Matt 5,29-30 in the context of sexual sin, and the parallels between Matt 5,29-30 and the redactions of Mark 9 in Matt 18,8-9, suggest that the meaning of σκανδαλίζω in 18,6 is sexual sin <sup>7</sup>. Since a literal “child” is in view, the scandal may be the sexual abuse of children.

## 2. *Matthew 18,6-9 and b. Nid. 13b*

This conclusion is not entirely novel. A few commentators have suggested that the σκανδαλίζω in Mark 9,42-48 may refer to the sexual abuse of children (often specified as pederasty without warrant) <sup>8</sup>. The strongest argument has been put forward by Will Deming, who noted the significant parallels between Mark 9,42-48, Matt 5,27-30, and *b. Nid.* 13b <sup>9</sup>. The Talmudic text states: “It was taught at the school of R. Ishmael, You shall not commit adultery implies, You shall not practise masturbation either with hand or with foot. Our Rabbis taught: proselytes and those that play with children delay the advent of the Messiah”. The text goes on to discuss the penalty for masturbation: “Come and hear what was taught: R. Tarfon said, ‘If his hand touched the membrum let his hand be cut off upon his belly’. ‘But’, they said to him, ‘would not his belly be split’? ‘It is preferable’, he replied, ‘that his belly shall be split rather than that he should go down into the pit of destruction’”. The connection of the sexual sins of the “hand” and “foot” with the sexual abuse of children, followed by a *Tob-spruch* (better than) statement that contrasts the excision of the offending

<sup>7</sup> The only other usage of the active form of σκανδαλίζω in Matthew is in 17,27, where the context clearly indicates that the action is not sexual in nature. The potential scandalizers are Jesus and Peter, and the action is directed against those who collect the temple tax. It is the failure of Jesus and Peter to pay the temple tax that would “scandalize” the tax collectors (ἵνα δὲ μὴ σκανδαλισώμεν αὐτούς), in that it would offend their religious expectations.

<sup>8</sup> GUNDRY, *Mark*, 525; D.C. ALLISON, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Millenarian Prophet (Minneapolis, MN 1998) 178-182; R.F. COLLINS, *Sexual Ethics and the New Testament*. Behavior and Belief (New York 2000) 66-67; LOADER, *Sexuality*, 124-127.

<sup>9</sup> W. DEMING, “Mark 9.42 – 10.12, Matthew 5.27-32, and *b. Nid.* 13b: A First Century Discussion of Male Sexuality”, *NTS* 36 (1990) 130-141. Despite the difficulty of dating these later rabbinic traditions, three rabbis mentioned in *b. Nid.* 13b (Eleazar, Ishmael, Tarfon) all lived at the end of the first century CE, which may indicate that the text was dependent on an early tradition (*Ibid.* 135).

member with eschatological judgment, has striking parallels with the proposed interpretation of Matt 18,6-9 <sup>10</sup>.

### 3. *Matt 18,6-10 and Divine Retribution*

It is also possible that the eschatological judgments pronounced in 18,6-9 may help explain 18,10. The imperatives in Matt 18,8 (ἐκκοψον αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ) and v. 9 (ἐξέλε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ) continue in v. 10: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones (Ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων)”. If 18,10 is continuing the same theme, then perhaps καταφρονέω may refer to a sexual sin in the heart or mind, which is again similar to Matt 5,28 <sup>11</sup>. In this sense, the warnings in Matt 18,6-10 align with *Mek. R. Sim.* Yitro 20:14 on Exod 20,13 that forbids adultery “by hand, by foot, by eye, or by heart” <sup>12</sup>.

The reason the perpetrator is not to “despise” one of these little ones is because “their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven” (Matt 18,10). This continues the previous eschatological judgments that depict the perpetrator being “thrown into eternal fire” (18,8) or “thrown into the Gehenna of fire” (18,9). In this context, Matt 18,10 refers to divine retribution through the agency of angels, not only for sinful actions but also for sinful thoughts. In an interpretation of Matt 5,28-32, Justin states: “For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by Him, but also he who desires to commit adultery: since not only our works, but also our thoughts (ἐνθύμημα) are open before God” (*I Apol.* 15). Since these angels are in the presence of God, sexual thoughts may be open before them, and other early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature explicitly claims that angels know the sinful thoughts of humanity <sup>13</sup>. *Sib. Or.* 2.214-219 states: “Then the imperishable angels of immortal God, Michael, Gabriel,

<sup>10</sup> Joel Marcus has attempted to undermine Deming’s so-called “X-rated” interpretation of Mark 9,42-48 by arguing that the “little ones” are disciples, and the offenses of the “hand” and “foot” and “eye” are not metaphors for sexual sin, but rather the instrument, transportation, and temptation to commit sin in general (J. MARCUS, *Mark 8–16* [AB 27A; New Haven, CT 2009] 687-699, esp. 696-697). Marcus’ critiques lose their significance when applied to Matt 18,5-9, since it correlates the “child” (παιδίον) and “little ones” (18,5-6), and parallels the excision statements in 18,8-9 with those in 5,29-30.

<sup>11</sup> BDAG, 631-632. This action is in the realm of the heart or mind. The only other occurrence of καταφρονέω in Matthew is 6,24, where it is comparable to hate.

<sup>12</sup> לא ביד ולא ברגל ולא בעין ולא בלב. See D. HOFFMAN, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Simon b. Jochai*. Ein Halachischer und Haggadischer Midrasch zu Exodus (Frankfurt 1905) 111.

<sup>13</sup> Ramael knows the thoughts of Baruch that are disturbed by the punishment that sinners will endure (2 Bar. 55.1-4); Michael knows the disobedient men and their wives are given to “jealousy and to fornication and envy, and they sin in many other ways” (3 Bar. 13.4 [Slavonic]). Also relevant is the warning in *Apoc. Paul* 10: “Understand

Raphael, Uriel, who know what evils anyone did previously, lead all the souls of men from the murky dark to judgment, to the tribunal of the great immortal God". This agrees with the judgmental role of angels in Matthew, where at the end of the age, "[t]he Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather up from his kingdom all the scandalizers and those who commit lawlessness (πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν), and they will throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 13,41-42) <sup>14</sup>.

#### 4. *The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matt 18,12-14)*

The common interpretation suggests that the straying sheep is an image of the disciple ("little ones") who has been led astray in their faith. Again, this interpretation is entirely plausible, but the eschatological judgments in this pericope are focused solely on the scandalizer, and so it is possible that the straying sheep is a metaphor for this individual. If the Matthean version of this parable is read together with the Lukan version (Luke 15,3-7), it is clear that the straying one is the "sinner", while the ninety-nine are innocent. It should be noted that the Matthean version is much less hopeful, while the celebratory aspect is emphasized in Luke (15,5-7). In Matthew, the one sheep is "led astray" (πλανάω), while in Luke he is "lost" (ἀπόλλυμι). In Matthew, the finding is a conditional statement (ἐὰν γένηται εὑρεῖν αὐτό), while in Luke it is certain that the lost sheep is found. In Luke, finding the lost sheep is interpreted as a sinner who repents, but in Matthew finding the lost sheep prevents "one of these little ones" from being "destroyed" (ἀπόλλυμι) <sup>15</sup>. When taken together with Matt 18,6-10, the Matthean version of the parable of the lost sheep may serve as a warning to the scandalizer. If they are straying from God by despising a child through sexual sin in their heart or mind, the angels and God are aware, and he will seek to draw them back in order to protect "one of these little ones" from being destroyed by sexual abuse.

then, children of men, that whatever you do, whether it is good or evil, these angels report (it) to God". See also 4 *Ezra* 3,28; 1 *En.* 99,3; 100,10.

<sup>14</sup> It is likely that τὰ σκάνδαλα refers to people (scandalizers) instead of things (scandals), since it is paired with people who commit lawlessness (BDAG, 753). The role of angels in eschatological judgment is also paralleled in Matt 13,49-50 and 16,27.

<sup>15</sup> In Matthew, ἀπόλλυμι is used to indicate being "lost" (10,6,39,42; 15,24; 16,25), but it is most often used to refer to something being "destroyed" or "killed" (2,13; 5,29,30; 8,25; 9,17; 10,28; 12,14; 21,41; 22,7; 26,52; 27,20).



### 5. *The Sexual Abuse of Children in the Roman World*

If Matt 18,1-14 is concerned with the sexual abuse of children, then Jesus' teaching stands in stark contrast to prevalent practices in the Roman world. Sex between free men (active role) and young boys (passive role) had a long tradition, was a widespread phenomenon that was socially acceptable, and appears normative in Greek sources <sup>16</sup>. Romans inherited this tradition, but they were critical towards sex with free-born boys, since they would later become citizens. In both cultures, sex between men and children (both boys and girls) of lower societal status was legitimate, particularly men and slave-children or men and child-prostitutes.

Literary sources from the end of the Augustan Era to the Early Imperial Era provide numerous examples <sup>17</sup>. Prayers are directed towards the phallic god Priapus in order to permit a man to have sex with boys and girls (*CIL* 14.3565) and provide advice on obtaining a boy lover (Tibullus, *Elegies* 1.4). Horace claims that when one is aroused, it is as natural as eating and drinking to vent their sexual energies on their slave-girls or slave-boys, since they are "easy and ready" (*Sat.* 1.2.114-119). The availability of slave boys is also noted by Juvenal. After stark amazement that his friend, Postumus, is getting married, Juvenal suggests multiple ways to commit suicide, but "if you do not like any of these many ways out, do you not think it would be better to have a little boy sleep with you (*quod tecum pusio dormit*)? A little boy (*pusio*) will not enter into night-time disputes, will not demand little presents from you as he lies there, and will not complain that you are not exerting yourself or that you are not panting as much as you are told" (*Sat.* 6.29-35).

It was a common trope that sex with a boy was more desirable than sex with a woman, and once married, a husband did not necessarily give up pederasty. Catullus teases a bridegroom: "it's rumored you're finding

<sup>16</sup> K.J. DOVER, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour", *Arethusa* 6 (1973) 59-73; *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, MA 1978).

<sup>17</sup> Based on our limited primary sources, it is difficult to calculate the prevalence of the sexual abuse of children in the Roman world. It is also difficult to determine if the sources are describing or prescribing the practice, or theorizing about legal principles, or simply conveying legendary or satirical statements. For sources on the sexual abuse of children in the Roman world, see: J. BOSWELL, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*. Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century (Chicago, IL 1980); T.K. HUBBARD, *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*. A Sourcebook of Basic Documents (Berkeley, CA 2003); BAKKE, *Children*, 140-149; M. JOHNSON – T. RYAN, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature*. A Sourcebook (London 2005); M.B. SKINNER, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden, MA 2005); A. RICHLIN, "Sexuality in the Roman Empire", *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (ed. D.S. POTTER) (Oxford 2006) 327-353; C.A. WILLIAMS, *Roman Homosexuality* (Oxford 2010); C. LAES, *Children in the Roman Empire*. Outsiders Within (Cambridge 2011) 222-277.



it hard with smooth boys to abstain, but abstain you must" (*Poems* 61.134-135). Martial also expresses his own attraction to slave boys, although he is unwilling to pay an exorbitant price to purchase extremely handsome ones (*Epigrams* 1.58; 4.42; 9.28). When he is caught by his wife with a slave-boy, he notes that anal sex with a boy is preferable to anal sex with her (*Epigrams* 11.43), and later states: "The wife and woman ought to know their own limits: let boys use their own part, you use yours" (*Epigrams* 12.96.11-12).

The sexual excesses of Nero are notorious. Suetonius claims that, besides "corrupting freeborn boys [...], [h]e had a boy named Sporus castrated and tried to transform him into an actual woman; he married him in a regular wedding ceremony, with a dowry and a bridal veil, he took him home in front of a large crowd, and treated him as his wife" (*Nero* 28). Suetonius also comments on the sexual proclivity of Virgil: "His sexual desire was especially inclined to boys, and his special favourites were Cebes and Alexander, whom he calls 'Alexis' in the Second Eclogue. This boy was given him by Asinius Pollio" (Suetonius, *Life of Virgil* 9).

Besides literary evidence, we also have material evidence for the Roman penchant for sex with children, particularly boys. In 79 CE, the sudden volcanic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius preserved numerous inscriptions and graffiti in Pompeii, including: "I want to [penetrate] a boy" (*CIL* 4.2210)<sup>18</sup>. The Warren Cup depicts two images of men having sex with boys: one side depicts a bearded man having anal sex with a beardless youth while a slave boy looks on; the other side depicts a beardless youth having sex with a boy<sup>19</sup>.

However, some Romans in the first century CE did not approve of sex with children, even with slaves<sup>20</sup>. For example, Cato bemoaned that Rome was collapsing: "when he saw good-looking boys selling for more than fields" (Polybius, *Hist.* 31.25.5). Ovid states: "I hate sex that doesn't gratify both partners and that is why I'm less enthralled with boys" (*The Art of Love* 2.683-84). Musonius Rufus, the Stoic philosopher who was banished by Nero, claimed that "sexual intercourse [is] justified only when it occurs in marriage and is indulged in for the purpose of begetting children" (*On Sexual Matters* 12), and he also notes, "I know a father so depraved that, having a son conspicuous for youthful beauty, he sold him into a life of shame" (*Ibid.* 16).

<sup>18</sup> See HUBBARD, *Homosexuality*, 422.

<sup>19</sup> D. WILLIAMS, *The Warren Cup* (London 2006) 46-48, dates the Warren Cup to between 5 CE and 15 CE, and reports that it was supposedly discovered at Bittir, six miles from Jerusalem.

<sup>20</sup> HUBBARD, *Homosexuality*, 383.

Despite these conflicting viewpoints in the Roman world, Jews and Christians universally condemned the sexual abuse of children. Philo's teaching against pederasty and the condemnation of pederasts is voluminous. The commandment against adulterers (Exod 20,14; Deut 5,18) also includes pederasts (*Decal.* 1.168); the wicked who lust after boys and attempt to make them look like women do what is contrary to nature, and are worthy of death (*Spec.* 2.50; 3.37; 4.89; *Contempl.* 1.62, 61). The *Sibylline Oracles* prophesy about future evils where "male will have intercourse with male and they will set up boys in houses of ill-fame" (*Sib. Or.* 3.185-186; 5.386-389), and it pronounces an oracle against Rome and its "adulteries and illicit intercourse with boys" (5.165). The Mishnah, Tosephta, and Talmud also contain numerous condemnations of pederasty <sup>21</sup>.

Early Christian literature also condemns the sexual abuse of children. Similar to the expansion of the commandment against adultery noted by Philo, the *Didache*, *Epistle of Barnabas*, and Clement of Alexandria all contain the commandments: "do not commit adultery, do not corrupt children" (οὐ μοιχεύσεις οὐ παιδοφθορήσεις) <sup>22</sup>. John Martens has convincingly argued that παιδοφθορέω was a Christian neologism meaning "to corrupt children", which implies sexual abuse <sup>23</sup>. The noun παιδοφθόρος also occurs in conjunction with adultery in Tatian (*Or. Greeks* 8.1), Theophilus (*Autol.* 1.9), and Origen (*Frag. Eph.* 24.4; *Comm. Jo.* 20.178). It appears that early Christians challenged the cultural practice of sex with children by coining new terminology; the person who had sex with children was not a "sexual lover of children" (παιδεραστής) but rather a "corrupter of children" (παιδοφθόρος) <sup>24</sup>.

It should not be imagined that these invectives are solely directed at the Roman world, since it can be assumed that these texts were written primarily to Christians. Later texts also direct invectives against the sexual abuse of children towards members of the Christian community.

The canons of the Council of Elvira rule that "Men who sexually abuse boys shall not be given communion even at the end" (Canon 71) <sup>25</sup>, and

<sup>21</sup> *m. Sanh.* 8.7; *b. Ber.* 43b; *b. Šabb.* 149b; *b. Yebam.* 25a, 54b; *b. Qidd.* 82a; *b. Sanh.* 54a-55a, 78a, 82a; *t. Soṭah* 6.9.

<sup>22</sup> *Did.* 2.2; *Barn.* 19.4; Clement, *Protr.* 10.108.5. See also Clement, *Paed.* 2.10.89; 3.12.89; *Strom.* 3.4.36.

<sup>23</sup> J.W. MARTENS, "'Do Not Sexually Abuse Children': The Language of Early Christian Sexual Ethics", *Children in Late Ancient Christianity* (eds. C.B. HORN – R.R. PHENIX) (STAC 58; Tübingen 2009) 227-254.

<sup>24</sup> HORN – MARTENS, "Let the little children come to me", 229. For further examples of early Christian responses to the sexual abuse of children, see 213-251.

<sup>25</sup> Canon 18 condemns clergy who are guilty of the scandal (*scandalum*) of sexual immorality (*moechati*), although it is does not specify if the offense is committed against a child: "Bishops, presbyters, and deacons, if — once placed in the ministry — they are

“A mother or female guardian or any Christian woman who engages in pandering, since she is selling another’s body — or even her own — shall not receive communion even at the end” (Canon 12). Monastic rules also curse male or female monks who sexually abuse children. The Rules of Shenoute state: “And whoever among us, in our (men’s) domain or in your (women’s) domain, shall touch boys [or] girls either while asleep or while awake, and whoever touch them in order to know whether they have come of age, shall be under a curse, whether male or female”<sup>26</sup>.

John Chrysostom bemoans the prevalence of the sexual abuse of children and declares that “womankind is in danger of being superfluous when young men (τῶν νέων) take their place in every activity” (*Oppugn.* 3.8), yet he directs a warning to the congregation: “But these persons who are, so to speak, ‘rational’, who have had the benefit of divine instruction, who say to others what should be done and what should not be done, and who have heard the scriptures which have come down from heaven — these men have intercourse more fearlessly with young boys (τοῖς νέοις) than with prostitutes”. He further states: “the parents of the children (παίδων) who are being violated bear it in silence; they do not bury themselves in the earth along with their children (τῶν παίδων), nor do they think of some remedy for that evil” (*Oppugn.* 3.8)<sup>27</sup>. He also condemns those who come to church, “gazing about at the beauty of women; others curious about the blooming youth of boys”, concluding that, “[i]t were better for such men to be blind; it were better to be diseased, than to abuse their eyes for these purposes” (*Hom. Matt.* 73.3).

## 6. *Synthesis*

The context of Matt 18,1-14 and its parallels with Matt 5,27-30 and *b. Nid.* 13b suggest that the σκανδαλίζω in Matt 18,6 is the sexual abuse of children. Jesus then uses hyperbolic warnings to convey its seriousness with a *Tobspruch* (better than) statement<sup>28</sup>: it would be better for

discovered to be sexual offenders, shall not receive communion, not even at the end, because of the scandal and the heinousness of the crime”. See S. LAEUCHLI, *Power and Sexuality. The Emergence of Canon Law at the Synod of Elvira* (Philadelphia, PA 1972) 92, where almost half of the canons deal with sexual behavior.

<sup>26</sup> Rule 508 in B. LAYTON, *The Canons of Our Fathers. Monastic Rules of Shenoute* (OECs; Oxford 2014). See also Rule: 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 26, 395, 396, 456, 504, 513, 515, 516, 562, 563, 566, 567, 574.

<sup>27</sup> See D.G. HUNTER, *A Comparison between a King and a Monk / Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life*. Two Treatises by John Chrysostom (SBEC 13; Lewiston, NY 1988).

<sup>28</sup> G. SNYDER, “The *Tobspruch* in the New Testament”, *NTS* 23 (1976) 117-120, notes the exaggerated and eschatological nature of *Tobspruch* (better than) statements in the NT.

the perpetrator to be drowned, rather than to commit this offense; if the cause of the abuse is the “hand” or the “foot” (instruments of the offense or perhaps a euphemism for genitals), cut it off and throw it from you; if the eye causes one to visually lust over a child, gouge it out and throw it from you; if one is fantasizing about sexually abusing a child in their heart or mind, they must beware of the future judgment and know that God is seeking them out in order to protect the child. In this interpretation, Jesus is directly condemning a common practice in the Roman world that is universally condemned in Jewish and later Christian sources. However, there is another possible interpretation of this pericope.

### III. THE TERM σκανδαλίζω AS EXPOSURE

The frightful warning that Jesus gives in Matt 18,6 to anyone who scandalizes a child is curious: “it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea (συμφέρει αὐτῷ ἵνα κρεμασθῇ μύλος ὀνικὸς περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῇ ἐν τῷ πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης)”. Drowning was a relatively common form of capital punishment against military opponents or insurrectionists<sup>29</sup>. Perhaps the closest parallel is noted by Suetonius about Augustus: “Because the tutor and attendants of his son Gaius took advantage of their master’s illness and death to commit acts of arrogance and greed in his province, he had them thrown into a river with heavy weights about their necks (*oneratis gravi pondere cervicibus praecipitavit in flumen*)” (Aug. 67.2)<sup>30</sup>. However, it is not apparent that the σκανδαλίζω envisaged by Jesus relates to insurrection, and the clearest difference is that the punishment of drowning is justice for the σκανδαλίζω against a child, not adults.

In Matt 16,27, Jesus indicates that when the Son of Man returns with his angels, “he will then repay every man according to his deeds” (cf.

<sup>29</sup> Alcaeus, *Test.* 3; Polybius, *Hist.* 2.60.8; Diodorus Siculus, *Lib. Hist.* 3.57.4-5; 4.33.7-11; 14.112.1-4; 16.35.6; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.450; *War* 1.326; Quintus Curtius, *Hist. Alex.* 10.4.2; Strabo, *Geography*, 8.6.13; Appian, *Rom. Hist.* 12.4.23; Suetonius, *Aug.* 33.1; Nero 35.5; Athenaeus, *Learned Banqueters* 10.443a.

<sup>30</sup> There are other examples of individuals being drowned with weights. Josephus notes that lepers are wrapped in sheets of lead and drowned in the sea (Ag. *Apion* 1.306-308), and Ptolemy’s general Patroclus captured Sotades of Maroneia, stuck his feet in a jar full of lead, took him out to sea, and drowned him (Athenaeus, *Learned Banqueters* 14.621a-b). A millstone around the neck is also used metaphorically in b. *Qidd.* 29b, where studying Torah after being married is like studying “with a millstone around the neck”.

Pss 28,4; 62,12; Prov 24,12; Sir 35,22-24). This follows the principle of *ius talionis* where a transgressor is punished in kind and proportionally for their deeds <sup>31</sup>. If that is the case in 18,6, then it is possible that the proposed punishment of drowning is directly correlated with the σκανδαλίζω against the child, and Jesus pronounces a warning of eschatological judgment against anyone who commits this atrocity.

### 1. *The Exposure of Children in the Roman World*

While it is difficult to enumerate the prevalence of child exposure in the Roman world, the literary evidence indicates that this practice was widespread <sup>32</sup>. Parents would expose their children for a number of reasons: (1) the child was “fatherless”, whether illegitimate or born after a divorce; (2) the child had physical disabilities; (3) to limit family size; (4) or because of portentous omens <sup>33</sup>. There are two types of exposure: (a) the parent more or less expects the child to survive; (b) the parent more or less expects the child to die. For the latter type of exposure, it is notable that the child is often drowned.

Seneca notes that it is by reason, not anger, that “unnatural progeny we destroy; we drown even children who at birth are weakly and abnormal” (*De Ira* 1.15.2). Livy reports that at Frusino, “there had been born a child as large as a four-year-old, and not so much a wonder for size as because, just as at Sinuessa two years before, it was uncertain whether male or female. In fact the soothsayers summoned from Etruria said it was a terrible and loathsome portent; it must be removed from Roman territory,

<sup>31</sup> This principle occurs multiple times in Matthew (5,19; 6,14; 10,32), Paul, and later apocalyptic texts like the *Apocalypse of Peter*, which will be discussed below. See E. KÄSEMANN, “Sentences of the Holy Law in the New Testament”, *New Testament Questions of Today* (trans. W.J. MONTAGUE) (Philadelphia, PA 1969) 66-81; D.D. FIENSY, “Lex Talionis in the Apocalypse of Peter”, *HTR* 76 (1983) 255-258; P. GRAY, “Abortion, Infanticide, and the Social Rhetoric of the Apocalypse of Peter”, *JECS* 9 (2001) 313-37, esp. 318.

<sup>32</sup> As with the sexual abuse of children in the Roman world, it is difficult to determine the motivation of the authors for detailing the exposure of children. For sources on the exposure of children in the Roman world, see: H. BENNETT, “The Exposure of Infants in Ancient Rome”, *CJ* 18 (1923) 341-351; J. BOSWELL, *The Kindness of Strangers. The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago, IL 1988); W.V. HARRIS, “Child-Exposure in the Roman Empire”, *JRS* 84 (1994) 1-22; M. CORBIER, “Child Exposure and Abandonment”, *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World* (ed. S. DIXON) (London 2001) 52-73; BAKKE, *Children*, 110-151; E. KOSKENNIEMI, *The Exposure of Infants among Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (SWBA 4; Sheffield 2009); J. EVANS GRUBBS, “Infant Exposure and Infanticide”, *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World* (eds. J. EVANS GRUBBS – T. PARKIN) (Oxford 2013) 83-107.

<sup>33</sup> HARRIS, “Child-Exposure”, 11-12; GRUBBS, “Infant Exposure”, 84-92.

far from contact with earth, and drowned in the sea. They put it alive into a chest, carried it out to sea and threw it overboard" (*Hist.* 27.37.5-8). It is also claimed that, "Aulus the miser drowned in the sea a child (τέκνον) that was born to him, reckoning how much it would cost him if he kept it" (*Greek Anthology* 11.172).

Like the sexual abuse of children, the exposure of children was abhorred by Jewish and Christian authors. Perhaps the strongest parallel with Matt 18,6 is from Philo's condemnation of parents who murder their children: "some of them slay them with their own hands, and stifle the first breath of their children, and smother it altogether, out of a terribly cruel and unfeeling disposition; others throw them into the depths of a river, or of a sea, after they have attached a weight to them, in order that they may sink to the bottom more speedily because of it (οἱ δὲ εἰς ποταμὸν ἢ θαλάττης βυθὸν ἀφιέντες, ὅταν ἀπαιωρήσωσιν ἄχθος, ἵνα θᾶπτον τῷ βάρει καταφέρηται) (*Spec.* 3:114). Christians viewed this practice as exceptionally cruel. Tertullian accuses the Romans of killing their children "in a more cruel manner, because you expose them to the cold and hunger, and to wild beasts, or else you get rid of them by the slower death of drowning" (Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.15; *Apol.* 9). There are also numerous early Christian commandments against exposure, equating it with murder <sup>34</sup>.

## 2. Matt 18,10, the Exposure of Children, and Divine Retribution

Matt 18,10 may also support the claim that the σκανδαλίζω in Matt 18,6 is the exposure of children. There are at least two examples where the verb καταφρονέω, from the phrase "see that you do not despise (καταφρονέω) one of these little ones" (Matt 18,10), is used in the context of exposing children. Basil claims: "The woman who has given birth to a child and abandoned (ἀμελέω) it in the road, if she was able to save it and neglected (καταφρονέω) it, or thought by this means to hide her sin, or was moved by some brutal and inhuman motive, is to be judged as in a case of murder" (Basil, *Ep.* 217.52). The *Acts of Thomas* (79) issues a sharp criticism of false prophets and apostles: "Not satisfied with one wife, they corrupt many women; saying they despise (καταφρονέω) children, they destroy (ἀπόλλυμι) many children, for which they pay the penalty". This likely refers to eschatological punishment.

<sup>34</sup> *Sib. Or.* 3.764-766; *Barn.* 19.5; 20.2; Justin, *I Apol.* 1.29; *Did.* 2.2; 5.2; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 35.6; Clement, *Strom.* 2.18; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 30; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 28.5.

The second phrase in Matt 18,10, “for their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven”, is also understandable if the σκανδαλίζω in Matt 18,6 is the exposure of children. Perhaps the clearest example is in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, which was likely composed in the first half of the second century CE, and provides the earliest Christian description of hell<sup>35</sup>. The text quotes Matt 16,27 three times (*Apoc. Pet.* 1, 6, 13), and provides clear examples of the principle of *ius talionis*. *Apoc. Pet.* 8 describes the punishment of men and women who have aborted or exposed their children, and their punishment coincides with their actions. In one scene, the women are in a very deep pit filled with “horrifying things and excretions. And the women (are) swallowed up (by this) up to their necks and are punished with great pain” (*Apoc. Pet.* 8). The drowning in filth is the eschatological recompense for drowning their children<sup>36</sup>. The text continues with another scene where the deceased children cry out to God: “And the milk of the mothers flows from their breasts and congeals and smells foul, and from it come forth beasts that devour flesh, which turn and torture them for ever with their husbands, because they forsook the commandment of God and killed their children” (*Apoc. Pet.* 8). Again, being devoured by beasts is the eschatological punishment for exposing their children. However, the most relevant aspect of *Apoc. Pet.* 8 is that the children murdered by exposure are “given to the angel Temlakos”. This angel has a special role to care for the children who are victims of infanticide, and later Christian authors follow the *Apocalypse of Peter* and indicate that exposed children are delivered to a guardian angel (*Exc. Theod.* 41, 48; *Apoc. Paul* 40; Methodius, *Symp.* 2.6.45)<sup>37</sup>.

### 3. *Synthesis*

The principle of *ius talionis* (from Matt 16,27) may indicate that the σκανδαλίζω in Matt 18,6 is the exposure, particularly the drowning, of children. “It would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea”, than to commit this atrocity and experience eschatological punishment. The parallels between Matt 18,10 and *Apoc. Pet.* 8 reiterate this theme — the exposed child will be handed over to a guardian angel, but the perpetrator will experience eschatological punishment<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> R. BAUCKHAM, *The Fate of the Dead*. Studies on Jewish and Christian Apocalypses (NovTSup 93; Leiden 1998) 176-194.

<sup>36</sup> GRAY, “Abortion”, 320.

<sup>37</sup> BAUCKHAM, *The Fate of the Dead*, 224.

<sup>38</sup> E. KOSKENNIEMI, “Forgotten Guardians and Matthew 18:10”, *TynBul* 61 (2010) 119-129, esp. 127, notes how guardian angels are also responsible for punishing perpetrators.



#### IV. THE TERM σκανδαλίζω AS THE EXPOSURE AND SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Two avenues of interpretation have been explored. On the one hand, the σκανδαλίζω of Matt 18,6 may be the sexual abuse of children, due to the parallels between Matt 18,6-10, Matt 5,27-30, and *b. Nid.* 13. On the other hand, the σκανδαλίζω may be the exposure of children, if the principle of *ius talionis* is applied to Matt 18,6, and the parallels between eschatological judgments in Matt 18,10 and *Apoc. Pet.* 8 are justified. These are two common atrocities committed against children in the Roman world, and Jesus' words in Matt 18,7 could be directed towards the culture and individuals that accepted these practices: "Woe to the world because of the scandals. For it is inevitable (ἀνάγκη) that scandals come, but woe to the person through whom the scandal comes". It is possible to tie these two strands of interpretation together, since the correlation of the exposure and sexual abuse of children is obvious: exposed children who survived were often picked up by pimps or others who enslaved them for sexual use.

Demosthenes offers a chilling account of Nicarete, who owned seven girls: "She was an expert in recognizing beauty in small children and understood how to rear and train them from long experience; this was her trade and she earned her living from them [...] When she had reaped the profit of their prime, she sold their bodies, each and every one of the seven" (*In Neaeram* 18-19). Terence claims that the exposed daughter will either "earn her living on the streets or be sold on the open market" (*Hau.* 640). Quintilian decries the father who exposed his son, whose fate is inevitable: "either wild beasts tore him or birds pulled him apart or, what would be more shameful, some pimp or gladiator-trainer picked him up" (*Decl.* 278.9).

Early Christian authors also make this same connection, but they use it in a polemical sense to insinuate that Romans unknowingly commit incest with their exposed children. Justin states:

But as for us, we have been taught that to expose newly-born children is the part of wicked men; and this we have been taught lest we should do any one an injury, and lest we should sin against God, first, because we see that almost all so exposed (not only the girls, but also the males) are brought up to prostitution. And as the ancients are said to have reared herds of oxen, or goats, or sheep, or grazing horses, so now we see you rear children only for this shameful use; and for this pollution a multitude of females and hermaphrodites, and those who commit unmentionable iniquities, are found in every nation. And you receive the hire of these, and duty and taxes from them, whom you ought to exterminate from your realm. And anyone who uses such persons, besides the godless and infamous and impure intercourse, may possibly be having intercourse with his own child, or relative, or brother.



And there are some who prostitute even their own children and wives, and some are openly mutilated for the purpose of sodomy (Justin *1 Apol.* 27) <sup>39</sup>.

#### V. 'WELCOMING' THE CHILD (MATT 18,5)

This interpretation of Matt 18,1-14 has focused primarily on the negative action (σκανδαλίζω) directed towards children in Matt 18,6, but we can now return to the positive action of "welcoming" commended in Matt 18,5: "Whoever welcomes (δέχομαι) one of these children in my name, welcomes me". The verb δέχομαι is often used in a Christian context to indicate the extension of hospitality and support <sup>40</sup>. However, the meanings of δέχομαι and λαμβάνω "easily merge into one another", and convey the idea of "taking up" exposed children <sup>41</sup>. This may suggest that Jesus is encouraging his disciples to care for children that have been exposed, either to prevent their death or subsequent sexual abuse.

Early Christian discourses contain numerous admonitions to support and not abuse orphans <sup>42</sup>. Clement critiques those who care more for animals than their own children: "And though maintaining parrots and curlews, they do not receive (προσίστημι) the orphan child; but they expose children that are born at home" (Clement, *Paed.* 3.4). *Const. Apol.* 4.1 also discusses how orphan boys and girls are raised: "When any Christian becomes an orphan, whether it be a boy (παιδός) or a girl (παρθένου), it is good that some one of the brethren who is without a child should take the boy, and esteem him in the place of a son; and he that has a son about the same age, and that is marriageable, should marry the girl to him: for they who do so perform a great work, and become fathers to the orphans, and shall receive the reward of this charity from the Lord God". In a discussion about presenting infants for baptism, Augustine notes that "sometimes foundlings which heartless parents have exposed in order for their being cared for by any passer-by, are picked up by holy virgins, and are presented for baptism by these persons, who neither have nor desire to have children of their own" (*Ep. to Boniface* 6).

<sup>39</sup> The argument for the connection between exposure, sexual abuse, and incest is also followed by Clement (*Paed.* 3.3), Tertullian (*Nat.* 1.16; *Apol.* 9;), Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 31), and Lactantius (*Inst.* 6.20).

<sup>40</sup> MARCUS, *Mark*, 682.

<sup>41</sup> *TDNT*, 2.50. After Pharaoh's daughter finds Moses, she gives him to his mother: "So the woman took the child (ἐλάβεν δὲ ἡ γυνὴ τὸ παιδίον) and nursed him" (Exod 2,9). Diodorus tells the story of an exposed child who is found by herdsmen and taken to Corythus, who "received the child gladly (παραλαβὼν τὸ παιδίον ἁσμένως), and raised him as if he were his own son" (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 4.33.11).

<sup>42</sup> *Barn.* 20.2; Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 6.2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 6.1; Justin, *1 Apol.* 67; *Sent. Sextus* 340; *Clementine Hom.* 3.71; Aristides, *Apol.* 15.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The common interpretation of Matt 18,1-14 in modern scholarship contends that this pericope is a warning to the disciples to prevent them from leading a fellow-disciple away from the faith. While there is a historical precedence for this interpretation (*I Clem.* 46.8), other early Christian authors interpret the meaning of σκανδαλίζω in a variety of ways, from any number of vices (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.27.4) to the admittance of idol-makers to the clergy (Tertullian, *Idol.* 7).

The context of Matt 18,1-14 suggests that Jesus is concerned about the welfare of children (παιδίον), and he presents eschatological warnings of divine retribution against anyone who scandalizes “one of these little ones”. The parallels between Matt 18,6-10, Matt 5,27-30, and *b. Nid.* 13b suggest that the σκανδαλίζω in Matt 18,6 may be the sexual abuse of children, while an interpretation of the *Tobsspruch* statement in Matt 18,6 (based on the principle of *ius talionis* from Matt 16,27) and the parallels between Matt 18,10 and *Apoc. Pet.* 8 suggest that the σκανδαλίζω may be the exposure of children. These two atrocities committed against children in the Roman world are universally condemned by Jewish and later Christian authors, who claim that the children who do survive exposure are often picked up and sexually exploited. Jesus’ warnings in Matt 18,6-9 are hyperbolic and severe: it is better to die or excise the source of the scandal than experience eschatological punishment as its penalty, which is unavoidable since God is mindful and will seek out the perpetrator to ensure the safety of the child (cf. Matt 18,10-14). Despite the emphasis on the negative actions to be avoided, the positive action is clear: the disciples are exhorted to extend hospitality to these vulnerable children and provide for their needs (cf. Matt 18,5).

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## SUMMARY

The common interpretation of Matt 18,1-14 in modern scholarship contends that this pericope is a warning to the disciples to prevent them from leading a fellow disciple away from the faith. Based on significant parallels between Matt 18,6-10, Matt 5,27-30, *b. Nid.* 13, and *Apoc. Pet.* 8, this article suggests an alternative interpretation where Jesus presents eschatological warnings of divine retribution against any disciple who scandalizes children through sexual abuse or exposure, rather than welcoming them and providing for their needs.

## LE POSSÉDÉ DE GÉRASA (MARC 5,1-20) QUAND L'INTRIGUE EST THÉOLOGIE

Malgré les innombrables études dont il a bénéficié, on constate avec étonnement que l'épisode du possédé de Gerasa chez Mc n'a pas encore dégagé toute sa saveur. La diversité des approches <sup>1</sup> a pourtant fait jaillir une multiplicité de sens à ce récit maricien coloré. Les résultats significatifs de la plupart des études méritent d'être pris en compte. On peut néanmoins aller plus loin en dégageant avec rigueur la dynamique narrative du passage. Les avancées de la narratologie ont manifesté combien le récit est porteur de théologie. La mise en intrigue des événements de la vie de

<sup>1</sup> Un rapide *status quaestionis* avec une clé francophone en donne un aperçu consistant : de l'histoire de la rédaction dont les résultats sont résumés par J.-N. ALETTI, «Lecture d'un récit. Mc 5,1-20. Une lecture en question», *Les miracles de Jésus* (ed. X. LÉON-DUFOUR) (Paris 1977) 189-208, à l'excellente comparaison synoptique de P. LAMARCHE, «Le possédé de Gerasa (Mt 8,28-34; Mc 5,1-20; Lc 8,26-39)», *NRT* 90 (1968) 581-597, de l'approche psychanalytique de L. BEIRNAERT, «Lecture d'un récit. Mc 5,1-20. Approche psychanalytique», *Les miracles de Jésus* (ed. X. LÉON-DUFOUR) (Paris 1977) 183-188, à l'analyse structurale de J. STAROBINSKI, «Le démoniaque de Gerasa: Analyse littéraire de 5,1-20», *Analyse structurale et exégèse biblique. Essais d'interprétation* (eds. R. BARTHES – F. BOVON – F.-J. LEENHARDT – R. MARTIN-ACHARD – J. STAROBINSKI) (Neuchâtel 1971) 63-94, ou d'A. PAUL, «Excursus: l'Exorcisme de Gerasa», *Le Fait biblique. Israël éclaté de Bible à Bible* (LeDiv 100; Paris 1979) 207-217, les anciens ont défriché le terrain avec bonheur. P. BEAUCHAMP, «Le possédé de Gerasa: Mc 5,1-20: corps individuel et corps social», *Une exégèse biblique* (Paris 2004) 71-79, en reprend les résultats avec souffle. Certains, tels J. DUNCAN – M. DERRET, «Contributions to the Study of the Gerasene Demoniac» *JSNT* 3 (1979) 2-17, esquissent un passage par une lecture haggadique ou midrashique. R. DETWEILER – W. DOTY, *The Daemonic Imagination. Biblical Text and Secular Story* (AAR.ASR 60; Atlanta, GA 1990), insiste sur la démonologie du texte. A. GAGNÉ, «Le démoniaque de Gerasa (Mc 5,1-20): propagande missionnaire et dénonciation socio-politique de la communauté de Marc», *NS* 3 (2001) 104-120, à la suite de beaucoup d'anglo-saxons (par ex., R. DORMANDY, «The Expulsion of Legion. A Political Reading of Mark 5:1-20», *ET* 111 [2000] 335-337), met en valeur les aspects socio-politiques du passage. On le pressent, la lecture du récit se fait de plus en plus synchronique. Pour structurer leur analyse sémiotique, J. CALLOUD – G. COMBET – J. DELORME, «Lecture d'un récit. Mc 5,1-20. Essai d'analyse sémiotique», *Les miracles de Jésus* (ed. X. LÉON-DUFOUR) (Paris 1977) 151-18, utilisent avec raison l'approche narrative. Plus récemment, la narratologie se déploie, attentive au suspense de l'intrigue (N. BONNEAU, «Mise en intrigue et suspense dans Mc 5,1-20», *L'intrigue dans le récit biblique* [eds. A. PASQUIER – D. MARGUERAT – A. WÉNIN] [Leuven 2010] 231-243), au lien avec le macro-récit (J.F. WILLIAMS, *Other Followers of Jesus. Minor Characters as Major Figures in Mark's Gospel* [JSNT.S 102; Sheffield 1994] 108-112) ou à la place du lecteur (A. GAGNÉ, «De l'*intentio operis* à l'*intentio lectoris*: essai herméneutique à partir de l'épisode du démoniaque de Gerasa [Mc 5,1-20]», *Théologiques* 12 [2004] 213-232, à la suite de C.S. LAHURD, «Reader Response to Ritual Elements in Mark 5:1-20», *BTB* 20 [1990] 154-160).

Jésus par la première communauté vise à dévoiler ce qui est compris du plan de Dieu. Ce premier geste de Jésus dans un territoire païen <sup>2</sup> revêt de soi une signification dont il faudra mesurer la portée.

L'écriture populaire et imagée de Marc a souvent suffi pour justifier la longueur, voire *les* longueurs, de cet épisode. Que Matthieu ait eu le bon goût de raccourcir l'ensemble (7 versets au lieu de 20) montrerait bien que Marc s'est laissé emporter par son appétence pour le pittoresque. Dans ce cas, on justifie la longueur de la description du démoniaque (vv. 3-5) par une approche sémiotique de la démonologie. De même, on absout le long développement final sur la supplique de l'homme guéri à Jésus par l'histoire de la rédaction <sup>3</sup>. Cette manière de voir ne rend pas assez compte du génie narratif de Marc. Ne distinguer qu'une unique et longue intrigue de miracle suivant la composition quinaire habituelle <sup>4</sup>, dont le climax arrive au v. 20 avec l'envoi du missionnaire chez les païens <sup>5</sup>, ne fait pas droit à la subtile construction de cet épisode.

L'apport décisif de cette contribution consistera à établir qu'avec un art consommé, Marc déploie une trame complexe, à rebondissement, où sont mis en exergue les obstacles et les exigences spécifiques à l'annonce du salut en monde païen. Elle montrera aussi combien la mise en scène élaborée de Marc, imbriquant résolution et révélation, porte une théologie sur la mission des disciples envers les païens.

## I. QUESTIONNER L'INTRIGUE

### 1. *Un récit complexe*

Que le récit soit complexe, une première lecture suffit à le montrer. Il est très étendu, faisant intervenir des éléments remarquables ou étonnants. La description du possédé (vv. 2-5) est la plus longue présentation d'un personnage secondaire dans les quatre évangiles. Le dialogue entre Jésus et l'esprit impur est confus et tourne au burlesque avec l'histoire

<sup>2</sup> Que le cadre géographique du paganisme soit inhérent au geste de Jésus, tous les commentateurs l'ont vu. Voir notamment E. WEFALD, «The Separate Gentile Mission in Mark: A Narrative Explanation of Markan Geography, the Two Feeding Accounts and Exorcisms», *JSNT* 18 (1996) 13-14. Dans ce cadre, il serait intéressant de montrer comment la séquence suivante, avec le double miracle enchâssé (La fille de Jaïre et la femme hémorroïsse — Mc 5,21-42) place volontairement les gestes de puissance dans une dimension juive (Cf. le cadre géographique, l'insistance sur les douze ans, l'utilisation de l'araméen...).

<sup>3</sup> GAGNÉ, «Le démoniaque de Gérasa», 111-112.

<sup>4</sup> GAGNÉ, «De l'*intentio operis*», 220-221.

<sup>5</sup> DUNCAN – DERRET, «Contributions», 4.

des porcs. À la fin, la demande des habitants et celle du miraculé déclenchent toutes deux une réaction inattendue de Jésus. Tout ceci suscite de nombreuses interrogations :

- Quelle interprétation donner au fait que Jésus semble descendre de la barque sans ses disciples? Serait-ce trop tôt pour une mission ecclésiastique chez les païens? Ou bien a-t-on affaire à un épisode réservé au lecteur?
- Comment interpréter la longue description du possédé?
- Qui a vraiment l'initiative de la rencontre? Pourquoi n'apprend-on la requête de Jésus qu'après la résistance de Légion?
- A qui Jésus parle-t-il: à l'homme ou à Légion?
- Pourquoi Jésus lui demande-t-il son nom? Quel est le sens de la réponse?
- Peut-on parler d'un pouvoir limité de Jésus en territoire païen (le démon ne semble pas obéir à la première injonction de Jésus)?
- Quel est le sens de la requête de Légion (ne pas quitter le pays – aller dans les porcs) et de l'autorisation de Jésus à aller dans les porcs?
- Comment interpréter la réaction des gardiens et celle des habitants de la région?
- Pourquoi Jésus se retire-t-il si facilement?
- Quel est le sens de sa requête à l'ex-démoniaque? Pourquoi doit-il rentrer 'dans sa maison'?
- Pourquoi Jésus refuse-t-il que le démoniaque exorcisé le suive?

Le lecteur a de quoi être décontenancé. Heureusement, Marc construit progressivement son audience et fait jouer ici la mémoire des scènes antérieures. Trois d'entre elles sont particulièrement éloquentes.

## 2. *La mémoire du lecteur*

L'épisode de la tempête apaisée (Mc 4,35-41) oriente déjà la compréhension et, par beaucoup de ses éléments, prépare Gérama: l'autre rive, les éléments déchainés et contraires, la question de la mort, l'intervention autoritaire de Jésus, le calme obtenu, le manque de foi des disciples, la crainte des spectateurs, la question de l'identité de Jésus. Que les deux épisodes doivent être lus comme une séquence <sup>6</sup>, beaucoup l'ont vu mais peu en ont

<sup>6</sup> La séquence continue même avec le double miracle enchâssé de la guérison de l'hémorroïsse et de la résurrection de la fille de Jaïre (Mc 5,21-43), comme l'a montré Aletti («Lecture d'un récit», 190). Le fait que Luc garde la même séquence des trois épisodes renforce cette conviction.

étudié la portée narrative. Avec la tempête apaisée, l'autorité de Jésus vient de se révéler de manière puissante contre des forces cosmiques. La composition quinaire de l'intrigue donne au lecteur une grille interprétative simple: Jésus est plus fort que la mer, un point c'est tout! Seulement, à Gérasa, l'intrigue va se révéler beaucoup plus emmêlée, à la différence de l'épisode de la barque. Le parallélisme entre ces deux épisodes met en lumière la complexité du deuxième. La résolution sera plus difficile et exigera une action plus élaborée et apparemment moins efficace.

Il faut également convoquer un autre épisode: la guérison du démoniaque de Capharnaüm (Mc 1,21-28). Le lecteur, informé peu à peu par le récit, a saisi que Marc fonctionnait souvent par dualité. Or il s'agit, à Gérasa, du deuxième récit d'exorcisme. La comparaison entre les deux événements s'impose. La *synkrisis* est construite par Marc et se justifie pleinement comme l'a montré Camille Focant<sup>7</sup>. Williams va plus loin en travaillant ce parallélisme non seulement dans ses rapprochements mais aussi dans ses divergences<sup>8</sup>. On constate alors combien la trame du second exorcisme est bien plus complexe: la description du possédé, la requête de son nom, l'entrée dans les porcs, la réaction des habitants, le désir du démoniaque guéri de rester avec Jésus...

Williams compare aussi Gérasa avec l'épisode du lépreux (Mc 1,40-45) à propos de la question de la publication et du secret messianique. Il pressent ainsi, sans en tirer toutes les conséquences, que l'intrigue ne porte pas uniquement sur la guérison, mais aussi sur les conditions de sa publication et de sa diffusion.

### 3. *Une triple intrigue à rebondissement?*

La multiplicité des difficultés narratives soulevées ainsi que la complexité du récit par rapport aux épisodes antérieurs mentionnés invitent à s'interroger sur l'intrigue pour en comprendre les articulations. Il y a deux

<sup>7</sup> «En effet, il s'agit du premier geste de Jésus en territoire païen. Alors que le premier acte de son ministère en terre juive avait été un exorcisme dans la synagogue de Capharnaüm (1,21-28), il est remarquable qu'il inaugure aussi son séjour en terre païenne par un exorcisme. Les traits parallèles entre les deux récits sont d'ailleurs frappants: les deux victimes sont décrites comme «homme en esprit impur» (1,23; 5,2); les deux sont violents et «crient d'une voix forte» (1,23.26; 5,7; voir aussi 3,11, sans la voix forte); leur première parole à Jésus est une même question à la tournure grammaticale bizarre, «Quoi à toi et à moi (nous)?» (1,24; 5,7); tous deux donnent à Jésus un nom qui le relie étroitement à Dieu et ils craignent ce qu'il va leur faire (1,24; 5,7; voir aussi 3,11). Les parallèles sont tellement forts qu'ils pourraient inviter le lecteur à considérer le récit de Gérasa «comme une seconde lecture de l'exorcisme de 1,21-28». C. FOCANT, *L'évangile selon Marc* (Paris, 2004) 196-197.

<sup>8</sup> WILLIAMS, *Other Followers*, 109-111.

difficultés à ne voir qu'une unique intrigue <sup>9</sup>: d'une part, la guérison est obtenue dès le v. 13; d'autre part, le dernier tiers du récit ne concerne pas directement l'expulsion, mais la réaction des habitants et du miraculé. Pour parvenir à structurer la trame de cet épisode, il faut, en toute rigueur, dénombrer les nœuds qui relancent le suspense. On y trouve en réalité trois complications qui amènent, dans un premier temps, à distinguer trois intrigues successives. À partir du moment où Jésus débarque en pays païen (v.1) trois suspenses, certes liés les uns aux autres, se succèdent: (1) aux vv. 6-7, que fera Jésus de la requête du possédé, suspense résolu au v. 13; (2) au v. 15b, que feront les habitants de leur crainte, suspense résolu au v. 17; (3) au v.18b, que deviendra le possédé exorcisé, suspense résolu au v. 20.

On découperait en conséquence comme suit:

### 1<sup>ère</sup> intrigue: l'expulsion du démon

- vv. 1-5 *Situation initiale*: présentation des protagonistes
- v. 6-7 *Nœud*: demande de l'homme à l'esprit impur
- vv. 8-12 *Complication*: dialogue entre Jésus et l'homme/démon
- v. 13 *Dénouement*: exaucement de la demande par Jésus et noyade des porcs
- v. 14a *Situation finale*: fuite des gardiens

Cette situation finale permet de rebondir dans la seconde scène car elle engendre la réaction des gardiens.

### 2<sup>ème</sup> intrigue: la réaction des habitants

- v. 14 *Situation initiale*: annonce des gardiens et venue des habitants
- v. 15 *Nœud*: constat et peur des habitants
- v. 16 *Complication*: explications des gardiens
- v. 17 *Dénouement*: requête du départ de Jésus
- v. 18a *Situation finale*: montée dans la barque

Puisque le suspense porte sur la réaction des habitants, la montée de Jésus dans la barque n'est pas le dénouement mais la situation finale. Cette situation finale permet de rebondir dans la scène suivante qui s'appuie sur ce départ de Jésus.

### 3<sup>ème</sup> intrigue: l'avenir de l'homme exorcisé

- v. 18a *Situation initiale*: montée de Jésus dans la barque
- v. 18b *Nœud*: demande de l'homme exorcisé d'être avec Jésus

<sup>9</sup> Gagné tente une intrigue quinaire («De l'*intentio operis*», 220-221), mais le dénouement qu'il propose (vv. 14-17) ne correspond pas à son nouement (vv. 3-7).

- vv. 19     *Complication*: refus de Jésus et envoi en mission
- v. 20a     *Dénouement*: mission de l'homme exorcisé en Décapole
- v. 20b     *Situation finale*: étonnement de tous.

Cette triple intrigue est éclairante car elle permet de repérer le fonctionnement des suspenses successifs. Cependant, elle laisse insatisfait sur le mouvement du récit et ne rend pas suffisamment compte de l'interdépendance des trois étapes.

#### 4. *Préférer une double intrigue à parallélisme?*

Plusieurs éléments orientent vers une double intrigue, s'articulant autour du v. 14a, à la fois situation finale d'une première intrigue et situation initiale de la seconde. L'arrivée de nouveaux acteurs au v. 14 (en effet, la présence des gardiens n'est signalée qu'à ce moment-là) et la reprise du verbe ἤλθον du v. 1 invitent à considérer cette nouvelle scène comme un rebondissement de l'intrigue. De plus, la quadruple utilisation du verbe παρακαλέω, deux fois dans chaque partie, souligne le parallélisme des requêtes: ne pas quitter (v. 10) / quitter le pays (v. 17), entrer dans les porcs (v. 12) / entrer dans la barque (v. 18). On pressent également que les vv. 14-17 et 18-20, que le découpage ci-dessus avait séparés dans un premier temps, sont liés par la thématique de l'annonce en territoire païen. Marc utilise le même terme ἀπαγγέλλω pour décrire l'annonce des gardiens (v. 14) et celle du possédé guéri (v. 19). Les vv. 14-17 présentent la réaction négative des païens à la puissance de Jésus et les vv. 18-20 exposent l'envoi du bénéficiaire de cette puissance chez les païens. Le fait que le v. 18 raconte dans un même mouvement la montée de Jésus dans la barque et la requête du possédé à Jésus montre que le rejet de Jésus ne peut être détaché de l'envoi en mission de l'homme guéri. Ainsi, il faut lire les vv. 14-20 comme la résolution au moins provisoire du même problème: celui de l'annonce et de la réception de l'Évangile en territoire païen. On pourrait ainsi s'orienter plutôt vers une double intrigue de résolution, celle du salut du démoniaque païen puis celle de la réaction à l'annonce de ce salut.

Proposons cette répartition:

#### 1<sup>ère</sup> intrigue: La résolution de la possession démoniaque

- vv. 1-5     *Situation initiale*: présentation des protagonistes
- v. 6-7     *Nœud*: demande de l'homme à l'esprit impur
- vv. 8-12    *Complication*: dialogue entre Jésus et l'homme/démon
- v. 13       *Dénouement*: exaucement de la demande par Jésus et noyade des porcs
- v. 14a      *Situation finale*: fuite et annonce des gardiens



Cette situation finale permet de rebondir dans la seconde scène qui s'appuie la réaction des gardiens.

2<sup>ème</sup> intrigue: La résolution de l'annonce aux païens

- v. 14b-16 *Situation initiale*: venue et constat des habitants
- v. 17 *Nœud*: refus de Jésus par les habitants du pays
- vv. 18-19 *Complication*: départ de Jésus et envoi en mission de l'homme exorcisé (Parole de Jésus)
- vv. 20a *Dénouement*: mission du possédé guéri en Décapole
- v. 20b *Situation finale*: étonnement de tous

La mise en lumière de cette double intrigue répond bien aux attentes narratives du v. 1. Lorsque Jésus débarque dans le monde païen, la question est double: a-t-il la même autorité en monde païen qu'en monde juif <sup>10</sup>? Après la proclamation de la Bonne Nouvelle en territoire juif, qu'en est-il de son annonce en monde païen? À la première question répond l'intrigue de résolution en 1-14a. L'intrigue de l'expulsion, en tant que telle, s'achève en 14a avec la fuite des gardiens. La résolution est obtenue: après bien des rebondissements, Jésus a autorité sur les esprits dans le monde païen. À la deuxième question, la seconde intrigue aux vv. 14b-20 répond à son tour: malgré les réticences, l'annonce de la bonne nouvelle pourra se faire en territoire païen. Cette seconde intrigue sur la proclamation se repère si l'on remarque qu'il a fallu attendre, d'une part le verset 14 pour apprendre que des spectateurs assistent à la scène et d'autre part le v. 20b pour avoir la réaction d'étonnement qui, habituellement, se trouve tout de suite après le miracle (la comparaison avec la première expulsion de Mc 1,21-28 est significative à ce sujet puisque la réaction de la foule y est immédiate). La question de la proclamation de la puissance de Jésus en territoire païen se pose donc à partir du v. 14 et ne trouvera sa résolution qu'au v. 20. Ce sont donc les deux scènes finales (vv. 14-17; vv. 18-20) qui résolvent la question de l'accueil et de l'annonce de Jésus en territoire païen.

<sup>10</sup> C. COMBET-GALLAND, «Quand la naissance du récit se raconte. Évangile de Marc (5,1-20)», *Raconter, interpréter, annoncer* (eds. E. STEFFEK – Y. BOURQUIN) (MoBi 47; Genève 2003) 112, affirme que la formule *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*, «pose la question de la présence de Jésus ici», en territoire païen. Cependant, la même formule était déjà présente dans le premier exorcisme en territoire juif (Mc 1,24), ce qui empêche de conclure dans ce sens.

II. LA PUISSANCE ET L'ANNONCE CHEZ LES PAÏENS

1. *Le double combat de Jésus*

Il semble même possible de parler de parallélisme (*synkrisis*) entre ces deux intrigues. En effet, la disposition du récit peut se lire ainsi dans un tableau récapitulatif:

	<b>La puissance</b> de Jésus face aux puissances de mort païennes vv. 1-14	<b>Annoncer</b> la puissance de Jésus face aux réticences du monde païen vv. 14-20
<b>ENTRAVES</b> Les obstacles sont racontés de façon étendue, précise et décourageante	<b>La puissance de l'esprit impur enferme le possédé dans la mort</b> Longue description du païen enfermé dans les puissances de la mort ( <i>showing du démoniaque en analepse externe</i> ) vv. 2-5	<b>L'annonce</b> (ἀπαγγέλλω) <b>des gardiens enferme les habitants dans la peur</b> Description du monde païen opposé à l'accueil de la puissance de Jésus ( <i>showing du démoniaque en analepse interne</i> ) vv. 14-16
<b>RÉACTION AU REJET</b> Jésus rejeté choisit de répondre	<b>Rejet de Jésus par l'esprit impur</b> Jésus <i>refuse</i> de laisser l'esprit <i>tranquille</i> ( <i>malgré</i> son παρακαλέω) vv. 6-10	<b>Rejet de Jésus par les habitants</b> Jésus <i>obtempère</i> à la requête de départ (à son παρακαλέω) vv. 17-18
<b>DÉPASSEMENT</b> Jésus surpasse l'opposition	<b>Jésus surpasse la puissance de mort par une autorité dont la puissance s'impose</b> Jésus <i>obtempère</i> à la requête d'expulsion (à son παρακαλέω) vv. 11-13	<b>Jésus surpasse l'annonce qui effraie par un envoyé dont l'annonce (ἀπαγγέλλω) étonne</b> Jésus <i>refuse</i> de le laisser monter ( <i>malgré</i> son παρακαλέω) vv. 18-20

Ce tableau met en lumière le double combat de Jésus dans le monde païen.

Son premier combat est celui qu'il mène face aux puissances de mort. Devant une puissance que les hommes ne peuvent lier (vv. 3-4), Jésus est suffisamment fort <sup>11</sup>. La double attitude refus/obtempération est

<sup>11</sup> Marc est l'évangéliste le plus disert sur les entraves que rencontre Jésus: c'est le cas dans l'épisode qui suit avec la longue description de l'incapacité des médecins à guérir la femme (Mc 5,25-26) ainsi que la réticence des gens à déranger le maître puisque l'enfant est morte.

significative à ce sujet. Si Jésus refuse de laisser tranquille l'esprit impur, il obtempère à son désir d'aller dans les porcs: obéissance toute ironique et qui se retourne contre la puissance maligne. Faut-il conclure que, pour mener sa victoire contre la mort, Jésus devra se soumettre à sa puissance? La lecture symbolique est ici trop précoce mais nous pouvons d'ores et déjà constater que Jésus renonce à un choix propre dans la manière d'expulser Légion.

Le second combat est celui que Jésus mène face aux réticences manifestées par le monde païen à l'annonce de sa victoire. Il décide de mener ce second combat 'par procuration'. En effet, la double attitude obtempération-refus s'inverse. S'il obtempère à la requête de quitter le territoire, c'est qu'il estime que la mission auprès des païens n'est pas la sienne, pour le moment du moins. En revanche, s'il refuse au possédé exorcisé de venir avec lui, c'est pour l'envoyer annoncer la puissance dont il a bénéficié. Par son obéissance <sup>12</sup>, le nouveau missionnaire mène, sur ordre de Jésus, le second combat, celui de l'annonce de la victoire de Jésus. Il doit, lui aussi, renoncer à un choix propre pour mener ce combat, dans un monde païen réticent à recevoir une telle proclamation.

## 2. La double difficulté chez les païens

La mise en lumière de cette double intrigue permet de rendre compte de l'originalité de l'épisode. Alors que bien des récits de miracles, à commencer par l'expulsion du démon en Mc 1,21-27, se seraient satisfaits des vv. 6-14a, le récit de Gérama insiste sur les réactions qui suivent le geste de Jésus. La rugosité et la longueur des composantes du récit dévoile qu'ici, en terre païenne, tout semble ardu: la situation initiale du démoniaque est inextricable (la longueur et la précision de la description vont dans ce sens), l'expulsion de Légion exige un long dialogue, les habitants

<sup>12</sup> Pour Combet-Galland («Quand la naissance du récit», 111), en dépassant la requête de Jésus de répandre la nouvelle, le démoniaque lui obéit avec zèle: là où on lui demande d'annoncer, il proclame, là où on lui demande de le faire dans sa maison, il le fait dans son district et quand on lui demande d'annoncer le Seigneur, il parle de Jésus. Gagné («De l'intentio operis», 224) montre à ce propos que, dans cet épisode, Jésus recevra le double titre de Fils de Dieu (v. 7) et de Seigneur (vv. 19-20) en territoire païen. Pour Williams (*Other Followers*, 111) en revanche, l'envoi en mission du démoniaque est comparable à une injonction au silence et le démoniaque désobéit, comme le lépreux en 1,45 (c'est le même verbe κηρύσσω qui est utilisé). Les deux interprétations sont complémentaires et il faut tenir que si l'annonce aux Nations commence ici, ce n'est que de façon limitée, du moins provisoirement. Le fait que le démoniaque dépasse la mission confiée par Jésus permet de maintenir que ce dernier n'a pas encore déployé toute sa puissance en terre païenne mais que prophétiquement, le démoniaque guéri représente déjà l'annonce faite aux Nations

païens ne veulent pas accueillir Jésus et enfin, la mission du possédé aboutit à l'étonnement mais pas à la conversion.

La mise en lumière de la double intrigue permet de résoudre progressivement un certain nombre de difficultés.

1. On comprend d'abord la longueur et la violence de la description du possédé. Il fallait une telle description pour mettre en exergue la difficulté du combat en terre païenne<sup>13</sup>. C'est pourquoi Marc décrit un homme que l'on ne peut vraiment plus lier, subissant une puissance qui dépasse les forces humaines et qui le fait habiter dans le monde de la mort. La description de la difficulté de la tâche prépare l'autre difficulté, celle du rejet par le monde païen<sup>14</sup>.

2. On comprend également la complexité du dialogue entre Jésus et Légion. Ce dialogue est construit par le narrateur comme étant apparemment défavorable à Jésus. Il faut d'abord noter l'inversion faite par le narrateur dans l'ordre des paroles (c'est Jésus qui parle le premier, et pourtant, sa parole n'est rapportée qu'en deuxième par le récit). Cela produit l'effet suivant: en faisant prendre immédiatement la parole à l'esprit impur, le narrateur insiste sur sa puissance d'opposition (v. 7), qui semble plus grande que la parole de Jésus, pourtant antérieure<sup>15</sup>. Dans l'ordre du récit, Jésus n'a pas encore pris la parole (au v. 8) que le démon s'oppose à lui avec virulence. Ensuite, la question du nom est également révélatrice. D'une part, le démon connaît le nom de Jésus et le lecteur sait qu'il dit vrai. Jésus, lui, a besoin de demander son nom (v. 9). D'autre part, au nom de Jésus, qui révèle sa solitude, une puissance multiple et combattive s'affiche dans le nom de 'Légion'. Enfin, le dialogue sur l'expulsion (vv. 10-13) montre que l'esprit impur a une double exigence

<sup>13</sup> Bonneau (*Mise en intrigue*, 237) remarque à bon escient que l'apparition du mot «tombeau» avant le mot «homme» revêt un fort effet narratif.

<sup>14</sup> Au demeurant, la description des vv. 2-5 est encore complexifiée par un déplacement à peine perceptible mais pourtant signifiant: en effet, le v. 2 et le v. 6 semblent rapporter tous deux la démarche du démoniaque qui s'approche de Jésus. Mais, à bien y regarder, le personnage n'est pas le même dans les vv. 2-5 et dans les vv. 7-13. Le 'il' qui s'approche de Jésus au v. 6 ne renvoie pas au même personnage. Ce n'est pas avec l'homme possédé que Jésus entame le dialogue mais avec l'esprit impur. Le glissement de personnage se fait subrepticement et l'effet est fort sur le lecteur qui, dans la suite des vv. 2-5, lisait le 'il' comme étant l'homme lui-même. Cela montre que l'homme ne possède même plus son identité et que l'esprit a tellement pris possession de lui que Jésus ne s'adresse qu'à lui.

<sup>15</sup> La tournure inversée chronologiquement des vv. 7-8 obtient un effet narratif détonnant: «Il cria d'une voix forte «que me veux-tu Jésus, Fils du Dieu Très-Haut? Je t'adjure par Dieu, ne me tourmente pas!». Il lui disait en effet: «sors de cet homme, esprit impur!». On apprend l'opposition à l'ordre avant d'entendre l'ordre. L'imparfait utilisé pour Jésus («il disait») montre la durée et l'insistance de la requête: cela amplifie l'impression que Jésus ne semble pas obtenir si facilement ce qu'il exige (ce dernier point est bien vu par LAMARCHE «Le possédé de Gêrasa», 585).

(ne pas sortir du pays, aller dans les porcs) à laquelle Jésus va acquiescer, voire se soumettre. Pour la troisième fois donc, dans ce dialogue, Jésus semble en position de faiblesse par rapport à l'esprit impur. Il faudra attendre la victoire ultime de Jésus pour que sa faiblesse prenne finalement le dessus sur l'esprit impur. De façon inattendue, le récit se termine d'une manière que 'Légion' n'avait pas prévue, c'est-à-dire par l'engloutissement dans les eaux, faisant ultimement comprendre que la victoire de Jésus est définitive. On pourrait résumer ainsi ce dialogue :

	<b>Position de force de l'esprit impur</b>	<b>Position de faiblesse de Jésus</b>	<b>Victoire de Jésus</b>
vv. 6-8	L'esprit s'oppose à Jésus (v. 7)	L'esprit n'est pas sorti à sa demande (v. 8)	
vv. 8-9	L'esprit connaît le nom de Jésus (v. 7)	Jésus ne connaît pas le nom de l'esprit (v. 8)	
vv. 10-13	Double exigence de l'esprit à propos de l'expulsion	Jésus acquiesce à leur requête	Le troupeau est précipité et se noie. La situation finale est ironique.

Le mouvement de cette scène est donc celui d'un renversement radical. Alors que Jésus semblait avoir perdu l'initiative et la toute-puissance sur les événements, le dénouement renverse totalement la situation. En fait, devant la virulence particulière de la puissance de mort chez les païens, Jésus s'est soumis à cette puissance avant de retourner la situation dans une ironie dramatique et inattendue. Il anticipe ici la stratégie qu'il mettra en œuvre dans sa passion, face aux puissances de mort et de paganisme.

Parallèlement à cette progression paradoxale dans les difficultés de Jésus, le rejet par les habitants (vv. 14-17) monte en puissance également en trois temps, avec un rejet de plus en plus manifeste. Les habitants réagissent à trois situations selon l'ordre suivant :

	<b>Action préalable</b>	<b>Réaction des habitants</b>
v. 14	Annonce par les gardiens	Déplacement pour voir
v. 15	Constat que l'homme est dans le bon sens	Peur
vv. 16-17	Récit par les témoins	Rejet de Jésus

La réaction des habitants est croissante quant au rejet. Si la curiosité commence par les faire se déplacer, ils ont peur devant un homme qui a

pourtant retrouvé sa normalité. Puis apprenant comment Jésus a fait cela, ils lui demandent de partir <sup>16</sup>. Là aussi, l’ironie est forte. Plus ils connaissent les clés de la libération, plus ils les rejettent. Cette scène anticipe ainsi la difficulté que l’on trouvera dans l’annonce de la Bonne Nouvelle en pays païen: étonnamment, ni le constat que l’homme a retrouvé sa dignité, ni le récit de la victoire de Jésus sur les forces de mal ne convainquent les païens. Il y a clairement une double pierre d’attente. L’évangélisation en terre païenne doit-elle se faire? Si oui, comment?

3. On comprend aussi pourquoi ce n’est qu’au v. 15, dans la seconde intrigue, que l’on voit l’homme dans le bon sens, et non à la fin du miracle de la première intrigue (v. 13) où cela était pourtant attendu. Ce retard dans le constat fait que le lecteur ne voit l’homme dans le bon sens que par les yeux des habitants. C’est leur point de vue qui domine, et ils sont immédiatement capables, pour la première fois du récit, de distinguer entre l’homme et ‘Légion’. Cette mise en récit permet de mettre en valeur l’importance du témoignage du démoniaque guéri. C’est lui le vrai témoin et non les gardiens qui, par leur récit, vont déclencher le rejet de Jésus. Certes, son témoignage passif engendre la peur, mais il est pierre d’attente pour un témoignage plus efficace.

4. Enfin, le parallélisme entre les deux intrigues permet de comprendre les jeux inversés d’obtempération et de refus mis en lumière plus haut. La scène de dialogue est inversée par rapport au dialogue avec l’esprit impur, selon le tableau suivant:

	Esprit impur (vv. 8-13)	Possédé guéri (vv. 18-20)
Situation initiale critique	Esprit incontrôlable	Rejet par les païens
Requête	Demande d’expulsion loin de Jésus mais dans le pays (παρακαλέω)	Demande d’intégration près de Jésus mais hors du pays (παρακαλέω)
Attitude de Jésus	Obtempération	Refus
Réponse de Jésus	Aucune parole rapportée	Parole de mission précise

<sup>16</sup> Beauchamp («Le possédé de Gêrasa», 73) remarque que l’interrogation des villageois passe du «ce qui s’est passé» (v. 14: τί ἐστὶν τὸ γεγινός) au «comment ça s’est passé» (v. 16: πῶς ἐγένετο): il y a bien une croissance dans l’information dont ils disposent. Leur rejet de Jésus n’en est que mieux informé. Beauchamp remarque aussi une forte ironie: Légion n’est pas expulsé du pays, Jésus, lui, l’est. Les païens veulent rester avec leur maladie. À la fin de cet épisode, il n’y a plus de mer agitée, plus de porcs, plus de possession; mais il y a toujours le péché des Gêraséniens («Le possédé de Gêrasa», 77).

	<b>Esprit impur (vv. 8-13)</b>	<b>Possédé guéri (vv. 18-20)</b>
Réaction	Les démons font ce qu'ils voulaient	Le démoniaque fait ce que Jésus veut
Dénouement renversant la situation initiale	Les démons sont engloutis	La bonne nouvelle est proclamée
Situation finale	Engloutissement dans la mer	Étonnement des foules

Pour la deuxième fois, Jésus renverse de façon inattendue ce qui semblait être un obstacle insurmontable: après le renversement, par l'engloutissement, du démoniaque incontrôlable, il renverse, par l'envoi de l'expossédé, le rejet du monde païen. Alors que la situation était dans l'impasse au v. 17 avec le rejet de Jésus, l'attitude de l'homme guéri permet d'ouvrir une voie nouvelle. En renonçant à sa volonté propre, en entrant dans l'obéissance par rapport à Jésus et en commençant la mission kérygmatisque, l'homme ouvre une voie nouvelle face au rejet de Jésus. En passant de témoin passif (assis, vêtu, dans le bon sens — v. 15) à témoin actif, il fait passer les foules de la peur à l'étonnement (*θαυμάζω*). Il ne s'agit pas encore de conversion ou de foi. En effet, la victoire définitive de Jésus sur les puissances de la mort n'a pas encore eu lieu et le temps de la mission universelle n'a pas encore commencé<sup>17</sup>. Il s'agit bien plutôt de révéler aux disciples que les obstacles de l'annonce dans le monde païen seront réels mais surmontés. Celui qui a vaincu les forces de la mort vaincra aussi les oppositions à l'annonce la Bonne Nouvelle.

### III. LA RÉVÉLATION D'UNE MISSION POUR LES DISCIPLES

#### 1. *Réunifier l'intrigue: de la résolution à la révélation*

Le retard de la situation finale, qui devrait être placée au v. 13 et qui l'est au v. 20, avait invité à proposer la possibilité d'une double intrigue. La répartition en double intrigue pour éclairante qu'elle soit, n'est pourtant, elle non plus, pas totalement satisfaisante. Elle ne doit pas faire

<sup>17</sup> Que la mission soit encore limitée, c'est peut-être ce que Jésus veut signifier en envoyant l'homme guéri seulement dans sa propre maison; c'est aussi ce que veut signifier Matthieu en rapportant que les démons reprochent à Jésus d'être venu «avant le moment» (Mt 8,29). On trouve tout naturellement ici la réponse à l'une des difficultés soulevées au début: si Jésus accepte de repartir du territoire païen, c'est tout simplement parce que la mission universelle n'a pas encore véritablement commencé. Elle ne le pourra que lorsque Jésus aura définitivement vaincu les puissances de mort.

perdre de vue que l'ensemble de l'épisode de Gérasa est très cohérent. L'inclusion géographique entre le v. 1 et le v. 20, ainsi que l'étonnement de tous qui n'est signalé qu'au v. 20 invite à lire cette double intrigue comme unifiée, la première intrigue constituant en elle-même le nœud de la deuxième.

En effet, le surinvestissement du récit sur la réaction par rapport au miracle (7 versets: 14 à 20) invite à lire ces versets non comme un épilogue un peu long à la suite de l'expulsion, mais précisément ce qui est la finalité de la venue de Jésus en territoire païen. Un détail aide à dévoiler cette finalité. Il est dit que Jésus descend seul de la barque. Ceci signifie que, pour des raisons inexplicables mais dont certains ont avancé des motifs possibles, la mise en scène fait en sorte que ses disciples n'assistent pas à l'épisode en territoire païen<sup>18</sup>. Cela est vrai presque jusqu'au bout. Un bémol doit être évoqué quant à l'absence des disciples à l'ensemble de ces scènes. Il y a tout de même une scène à laquelle ils ont nécessairement assisté puisqu'elle se passe après le retour de Jésus dans la barque: celle de l'envoi en mission du possédé guéri par Jésus. En repartant de Décapole, les disciples ne sont peut-être pas conscients de la puissance des forces du mal décrites aux vv. 2-5, de la longue démarche d'expulsion déployée aux vv. 6-13, ni de la réticence des païens montrée aux vv. 14-17. Mais ils assistent à la requête par laquelle Jésus envoie annoncer la bonne nouvelle en pays païen. Pour les disciples, cet épisode n'a pas valeur de résolution mais de révélation. Même s'ils n'y semblent pas encore prêts, comme le montrera leur réticence<sup>19</sup> durant toute la section des pains (Mc 6,6 – 8,26), Jésus leur dévoile son dessein que la bonne nouvelle du salut soit annoncée en pays païen<sup>20</sup>. Effectivement, une

<sup>18</sup> Certains pourront évoquer la présence de εἰθύς, qui permettrait de dire que toute la scène se déroule sur la berge, en présence des disciples laissés dans la barque. Il me semble que l'utilisation de l'adverbe par Mc, surabondante et pas toujours significative temporellement, empêche de tirer une leçon absolue à ce sujet. L'adverbe est certes absent de certains manuscrits, mais, là non plus, on ne peut conclure. En revanche, le fait que Mc précise que seul Jésus descend doit être interprété. Peut-être les disciples ne descendent-ils pas simplement pour ne pas mettre le pied en sol païen? Cela ne serait pas cohérent avec leur présence en Phénicie au chapitre 7. Nous y voyons plutôt le désir de Mc de déployer cet épisode en l'absence des disciples. Au demeurant, une autre interprétation sur l'assistance des disciples à la guérison n'ôterait rien à l'intention de Jésus de leur révéler son projet de mission universelle.

<sup>19</sup> Le fait que Jésus doive obliger les disciples à monter dans la barque en Mc 6,45 accentue encore l'impression de réticence des disciples à quitter leur propre territoire.

<sup>20</sup> On peut même dire que Jésus lance la mission en territoire païen, certes de manière limitée et anticipative, avant de la lancer en territoire juif. La demande de l'ex-possédé d'«être avec Jésus» (v. 18) correspond à une intégration dans le groupe des disciples qui sont définis comme tels depuis Mc 3,14. Mais les Douze devront attendre le retour pour être envoyés en territoire juif (Mc 6,7).



analyse de l'ensemble de l'évangile montre que, si la mission universelle ne sera lancée qu'après sa mort et sa résurrection, Jésus prépare ses disciples à une telle éventualité pendant son ministère public (les deux multiplications des pains en Marc 6 et 8, les discours aux quatre, devant Jérusalem, en Marc 13).

Cette réunification de l'intrigue met en valeur une intrigue de révélation, qui permet de passer d'un non-savoir à un savoir. Ce que l'on ne sait pas quand Jésus arrive sur l'autre rive, c'est ce qu'il va faire en territoire païen. Le suspense porte tout naturellement sur les intentions de Jésus. La levée de cette question ne se fait bien évidemment pas au v. 13 lorsque Jésus vainc l'esprit impur: d'une part, on sait déjà, depuis Mc 1,21-28, que Jésus est plus fort que les démons, et on ne saisisait pas vraiment ce qu'il y aurait de nouveau à ce que l'esprit impur soit païen. D'autre part, s'il était venu pour faire savoir qu'il est plus fort que les puissances de mort du paganisme, il aurait pris ses disciples avec lui. La révélation aux disciples (et on le verra plus tard, au lecteur également) ne peut porter que sur le seul événement auquel ils sont associés, l'envoi du possédé guéri en mission dans le territoire païen. Il s'agit bien d'une révélation sur la légitimité, et même la nécessité (cf. le refus de faire monter l'homme dans la barque), d'annoncer la victoire de Jésus sur les forces de mort, c'est-à-dire le salut et la miséricorde (cf. «il a eu pitié de toi» — v. 19) à toutes les nations.

Ainsi, on peut ainsi proposer une structure de l'intrigue de révélation

- v. 1            *Situation initiale*: arrivée de Jésus au pays des Geraséniens
- v. 2a          *Nœud*: descente de la barque. Ignorance de ses intentions  
par les disciples et le lecteur
- vv. 2b-18a   *Complication*: victoire de Jésus sur l'esprit impur en pays  
païen et peur des habitants aboutissant au renvoi de Jésus
- v. 18b-19    *Dénouement*: révélation aux disciples de l'envoi d'un mis-  
sionnaire en territoire païen
- v. 20          *Situation finale*: mission du possédé guéri

On comprend ainsi que tout se passe, y compris en l'absence des disciples, pour que ces derniers se voient révéler l'intention de Jésus: que la nouvelle de sa victoire sur toute forme de mort soit à annoncer à tous. La victoire sur la mort et sa proclamation universelle sont intimement liées. La victoire de Jésus ne serait que partielle si la proclamation n'en était pas faite. L'intrigue de résolution (victoire sur les puissances du mal) est incomplète tant qu'elle n'est pas accomplie dans une intrigue de révélation (il faut l'annoncer à toutes les nations).

## 2. *L'effet sur le lecteur: une interprétation postapostolique pour une révélation eschatologique et ecclésiale*

Quel est l'effet d'un tel récit sur le lecteur? Le fait que Jésus descende seul de la barque, et qu'il n'y ait donc pas de témoins parmi les disciples constitue ce récit comme un patrimoine quasi exclusif du narrateur et du lecteur. A travers cette intrigue de résolution, le narrateur livre des informations dont ne bénéficie pas le disciple interne au récit. Cela oriente la lecture vers une interprétation postapostolique, qui fait de ce récit une intrigue de révélation pour le lecteur.

La mise en lumière du double temps de l'intrigue suggère ainsi une dynamique eschatologique. En effet, si la victoire sur les puissances du mal semble acquise dans le temps du récit pour le premier combat, la victoire du second combat — l'annonce en pays païen — est encore à obtenir dans un avenir du récit qui n'est pas déterminé. Le parallélisme entre les deux temps de l'intrigue permet d'établir un parallélisme entre le temps de Jésus et celui de l'Église. Si seul Jésus est capable de venir à bout des puissances de mort, le combat que l'Église devra mener pour l'annonce dans un monde païen est comparable à celui que Jésus a mené face aux puissances de mort. Dans les deux cas, il s'agit d'un monde inhospitalier au cœur duquel la seule arme efficace est le renoncement à sa volonté propre. Par sa victoire, Jésus a vaincu la mort. Par la proclamation, son envoyé peut répandre et communiquer cette victoire à toutes les nations.

Ainsi est révélée au disciple postapostolique la légitimité de la mission universelle. Le fait que le narrateur précise au v. 20 que l'homme guéri *commence* (ἤρξατο) à proclamer ce que Jésus a fait pour lui confirme qu'il faut lire dans cet épisode l'initiation, ou plus exactement l'anticipation, de la mission universelle (ce n'est pas encore le temps de la mission universelle car même si les gens s'étonnent [θαυμάζω], ils ne se convertissent pas encore).

### *Conclusion*

Un premier acquis de cette étude est de confirmer les enseignements d'un tel épisode pour le lecteur:

- L'homme païen est enfermé dans des forces de mort qu'aucune puissance humaine ne peut défaire (vv. 2-5).
- Le Christ dispose de la puissance pour connaître (révélation du nom) et abattre les forces (nombreuses = légion) du mal et de la mort (vv. 6-13): ce fait est révélé par le démon lui-même.

- Le monde païen est fortement réticent à l'annonce de la bonne nouvelle de la libération par Jésus (vv. 14-17).
- Le païen lui-même, fort de sa libération par Jésus, est légitimé à proclamer la puissance et la miséricorde du sauveur (vv. 8-20).
- Le disciple à son tour est légitimé et envoyé pour répandre chez les païens la bonne nouvelle de la puissance de Jésus sur la mort.

Le second acquis est d'avoir mis en lumière la véritable finalité du passage. En distinguant l'intrigue de résolution de l'intrigue de révélation, l'étude a fait apparaître que la seconde prenait le pas sur la première. L'intrigue de révélation, présente dès le début, se manifeste surtout à la fin et fait apparaître la visée de la péricope: dévoiler qu'il faudra attendre le délai de la victoire définitive de Jésus sur la mort pour commencer la mission universelle. En articulant très subtilement son récit en deux temps, en insistant sur les obstacles rencontrés par Jésus, le récit — par la bouche de Jésus lui-même — a révélé que l'évangélisation en territoire païen serait âpre et reportée au temps de l'Église. Il a suffi de se laisser guider par le narrateur marcien pour découvrir une théologie affinée de la mission chez les gentils.

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#### SUMMARY

Mark narrates the scene of the Gerasene Demoniac in a particularly extended way. The emphatic description of the obstacles overcome by Jesus is not only a matter of Mark's colorful style. The plot's complexity hides a very subtle theology concerning the Gentile mission. The two-stage narrative construction reveals Jesus' project: after having showed his power over evil forces, Jesus plans the announcement of this power by the Gentiles. Thus, a plot of revelation appears behind the plot of resolution, showing many angles of the universal Gospel diffusion: its obstructions, its necessity, its legitimacy, its time limits, its actors.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ROMANS

One of the most striking differences between Jesus and Paul is the scarcity of references to the “kingdom of God” in the letters of the apostle. Although it is the most central term in the teaching of Jesus, the “kingdom of God” (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) and its equivalents occur only eight times in the undisputed Pauline letters (Rom 14,17; 1 Cor 4,20; 6,9.10; 15,24.50; Gal 5,21; 1 Thess 2,12) <sup>1</sup>.

Even more telling is the fact that kingdom terminology does not appear to play any significant role in Paul’s theological argument <sup>2</sup>. Most of his references come across as formulaic. He assures the Galatians and Corinthians that certain sinners will not inherit the kingdom of God, but he does not argue his case or develop the point. It would appear that he is appealing to shared tradition <sup>3</sup>.

Many scholars have therefore suggested that other terms have replaced Jesus’ “kingdom of God” in Paul’s theology. Rudolf Bultmann has been followed by many scholars in identifying “the righteousness of God” as the Pauline counterpart to “the kingdom of God” <sup>4</sup>. Another significant proposal is that the Pauline Holy Spirit corresponds to the kingdom of God <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> There are six occurrences in the disputed letters, including references to the kingdom of Christ (Eph 5,5; Col 1,13; 4,11; 2 Thess 1,5; 2 Tim 4,1.18).

<sup>2</sup> U. LUZ, “βασιλεία”, *EDNT* I, 204.

<sup>3</sup> K.P. DONFRIED, “Paul and the Kingdom of God”, *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity* (London 2002) 243-247. G. HAUF, “Reich Gottes bei Paulus und in der Jesus-tradition”, *NTS* 31 (1985) 468-469, finds the background in baptismal instruction and missionary proclamation.

<sup>4</sup> R. BULTMANN, “Die Bedeutung des geschichtlichen Jesus für die Theologie des Paulus”, *Glauben und Verstehen*. Gesammelte Aufsätze von Rudolf Bultmann (Tübingen 1933) I, 188-213, and, with modifications, A.J.M. WEDDERBURN, “Paul and Jesus: The Problem of Continuity”, *Paul and Jesus*. Collected Essays (ed. A.J.M. WEDDERBURN) (JSNTSup 37; Sheffield 1989) 102-110. Even though he reaches very different conclusions than Bultmann regarding Paul’s dependence upon the teaching of Jesus, D. WENHAM, *Paul. Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI 1995) 58, agrees that the righteousness of God functions in Paul’s theology in a way similar to the kingdom in the proclamation of Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> I.H. MARSHALL, “The Hope of a New Age: The Kingdom of God in the New Testament”, *Themelios* 11 (1985) 5-15; F. YOUNG, “Paul and the Kingdom of God”, *The Kingdom of God and Human Society*. Essays by Members of the Scripture, Theology and Society Group (ed. R. BARBOUR) (Edinburgh 1993) 245; J.D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 191; Y. CHO, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings*

These suggestions have great merit, but I will argue that there are other and more immediate connections between Paul's theology and the Jesus tradition regarding the kingdom. Specifically, I intend to show that Paul interprets Jesus' vision of the already present kingly rule of God in a distinctly ethical way. This interpretation is most clearly developed in Romans 5–8, in Paul's portrait of the believers' kingly rule over sin.

To establish this thesis, I will first briefly survey some of the ways in which the term "kingdom of God" is used in the Jesus tradition as it is preserved in the Synoptic Gospels. As my purpose here is to show the connection between Paul and the Jesus tradition, not the historical Jesus, I will not enter into any discussion of the authenticity of these sayings. Second, I will demonstrate the connections between the use of kingdom terminology in the Jesus tradition and Paul's theology, with a special focus on Romans 5–8. Third, I will show how Paul develops these ideas in his distinctly ethical way. To better understand Paul's description of the hostile powers in Romans 5–8, I will read this treatise in light of the terminology and worldview that are attested in the literature of Second Temple Judaism. A fourth subsection is devoted to this task, and a fifth section outlines the main differences between Paul and these sources. In the sixth part, I will show that my interpretation is confirmed by the only occurrence of the term "kingdom of God" in Romans (14,17).

## I. THE KINGDOM IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

As for the translation of the term βασιλεία, the term may refer both to the idea of a kingdom as a territory and to a kingdom as a dominion, more aptly rendered in modern English as "kingly rule". A few scholars have found a spatial dimension to the kingdom language in the Synoptics, an idea that is in evidence especially in the sayings that refer to "entrance into the kingdom" (Mark 9,47; 10,15 par.; 10,23-25 par.; Matt 5,20; 7,21; 18,3; 23,13) <sup>6</sup>. However, most scholars correctly agree that the dynamic concept of a kingly rule is the primary, if not the only, meaning in the Jesus tradition (e.g., Luke 11,20 par.) <sup>7</sup>.

*of Luke and Paul. An Attempt to Reconcile These Concepts* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Waynesboro, GA 2005) 61-109.

<sup>6</sup> See especially H. KVALBEIN, *Jesus: Hvem var han og hva ville han? En innføring i de tre første evangeliens budskap* (Oslo 2008) 88-101; D.C. ALLISON, JR., *Constructing Jesus. Memory and Imagination* (Grand Rapids, MI 2009) 164-190; see also J.C. O'NEILL, "The Kingdom of God", *NovT* 35 (1993) 130-141; U. LUZ, "βασιλεία", *EDNT* I, 202.

<sup>7</sup> Following G. Dalman, who demonstrated that βασιλεία-language in the Jesus tradition must be understood against the background of the Hebrew term מלכות, which must

This dynamic concept of the kingdom is developed somewhat differently in the individual Gospels. In comparison with Mark, Matthew and Luke seem to have a stronger emphasis on the kingdom as future. However, all the Synoptic Gospels reflect a tradition that sees the kingdom as a force that has already broken into this world or is in the process of breaking into it <sup>8</sup>. In Mark's Gospel, this understanding is reflected in the growth parables. The kingdom is likened to the seed scattered on the ground and its power to produce grain (Mark 4,26-29), as well as to the mustard seed and its ability to become the largest of the garden plants (Mark 4,30-32). The association between the kingdom and power is made explicit in Jesus' announcement in Mark 9,1: "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power".

In the double tradition, the power of the kingdom manifests itself in Jesus' triumph over the evil spirits. The saying in Luke 11,20/Matt 12,28 is illustrative: "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you". Drawn from the picture of YHWH as the divine warrior (Isa 49,24-25), the conflict is described in military terms: "But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers (νικήσῃ) him, he takes away the armor (πανοπλίαν) in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder" (Luke 11,22 par.).

This power of the kingdom is also seen in the miracles that are evocative of God's new creation (Luke 7,22 par. alludes to the prophecies in Isa 26,19; 29,18; 35,5-6; 42,7.18; 61,1). For the people that are oppressed by demons and physical disabilities, the kingdom exerts a liberating force <sup>9</sup>.

In his social practices, Jesus includes people that were often considered to be excluded from the people of God (Mark 2,13-17 par.; Luke 7,34 par.; 7,36-50). His practices are formative of a new community, the community of those who belong in the kingdom (Mark 10,14-15 par.; Luke 7,28-29 par.; 14,15-24 par.; Matt 21,31.43). As the kingdom is community-shaping, it also has ethical implications, as can be seen from

be translated "kingly rule" (G. DALMAN, *The Words of Jesus*. Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language [Edinburgh 1902] 91-147).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., H. MERKEL, "Die Gottesherrschaft in der Verkündigung Jesu", *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult* (eds. M. HENGEL – A.M. SCHWEMER) (WUNT 55; Tübingen 1991) 142-150.

<sup>9</sup> Similarly, M. HANNAN, *The Nature and Demands of the Sovereign Rule of God in the Gospel of Matthew* (LNTS 308; London 2006) 74, 231; J.B. GREEN, "Kingdom of God/Heaven", *DJG*, 474-477; K.A. KUHN, *The Kingdom of God According to Luke and Acts*. A Social, Literary, and Theological Introduction (Grand Rapids, MI 2015) 247-250.

the stated requirements and conditions for those who seek to be included in the kingdom (Matt 5,20; 6,33 par.; 25,31-46) <sup>10</sup>.

The Synoptics also display some variety when it comes to the terminology that is used with reference to the kingdom. Matthew uses the terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” without any discernible distinction in meaning. Luke sometimes employs the verb “to rule” (βασιλεύω) as another way of describing the presence of the kingdom (cf. Luke 1,33; 19,14-15.27). His choice of phraseology affirms that, for him, the kingdom is a dynamic concept. The way in which he uses the verb and the noun in reference to the same concept should also serve as a guide in our quest for early Christian echoes of Jesus’ teaching regarding the kingdom. Not only the noun βασιλεία but also the verb βασιλεύω may be used to recall this tradition.

## II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN PAUL

The student that turns from the Synoptic Gospels to the apostle Paul is immediately struck by the differences between them. Whereas the Jesus of the Gospels, at least primarily, envisions the kingdom as a royal power, Paul appears to focus on the kingdom as a territory. He speaks of those who will or, more accurately, will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6,9.10; 15,50; Gal 5,21) <sup>11</sup>. The same holds true for his reminder to the Thessalonians, that God is the one “who calls you into his own kingdom and glory” (1 Thess 2,12).

The much-discussed tension between present and future connotations is also less pronounced in Paul, where a future understanding of the kingdom is predominant. In six of the eight occurrences in the undisputed letters, the kingdom is primarily, if not exclusively, associated with the future (1 Cor 6,9.10; 15,24.50; Gal 5,21; 1 Thess 2,12).

It would appear, therefore, that a study of the term βασιλεία confirms the conclusion that Paul has little in common with the Jesus tradition. However, a complete investigation cannot be satisfied with a mere word study. It is necessary to investigate possible conceptual connections.

A place to begin may be the instance in which the term “kingdom” (βασιλεία) plays the most significant role in Paul’s argument, namely

<sup>10</sup> See further J. SCHLOSSER, *Le règne de Dieu dans les dits de Jésus* (EBib; Paris 1980) esp. II, 671-674; similarly, HANNAN, *The Nature and Demands*, 152.

<sup>11</sup> Similarly, J.A. FITZMYER, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; New Haven, CT 2008) 225.

1 Cor 15,20-28. The passage forms a crucial juncture in Paul's defense of the conviction that all believers will be resurrected. Having established that Christ was resurrected (15,1-19), he explains that Christ is the first fruits of the dead (15,20). Christ is the positive counterpart to Adam, in whom all died, so that those who belong to Christ will be made alive (15,21-22). Following this general resurrection, the end comes (15,24). That is the time when Christ "is handing the kingdom over to God the Father and when he destroys every ruler and authority and power" (15,24). Such a future handing over presupposes that the kingdom is in some sense already a present reality <sup>12</sup>.

This statement is significant also because it reflects the dynamic understanding of the term βασιλεία, having connotations of a "kingly rule" or "dominion" <sup>13</sup>. As such, this kingly rule is closely associated with the defeat of the cosmic enemies of God's people. Even death is included among the rulers and authorities and powers that will be destroyed, as Paul affirms in v. 26: "the last enemy to be destroyed is death".

The passage in 1 Cor 15,20-28 offers not only a terminological link to the Jesus tradition, but also a conceptual link. The kingly rule is associated with Christ's triumph over the cosmic enemies of God's people, and this victory is already a reality, even though the complete destruction of the enemies still lies in the future <sup>14</sup>. In the Beelzebul saying, Jesus uses militaristic language to proclaim that he has triumphed over the evil one: "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder" (Luke 11,21-22 par.). Jesus also maintains that his victory is the evidence that shows the presence of God's kingly rule: "if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11,20 par.) <sup>15</sup>.

The Beelzebul saying and 1 Cor 15,20-28 both combine the metaphors of a military victory and the consequent exercise of kingly rule. There are therefore good reasons to see a Pauline development of the Jesus tradition

<sup>12</sup> DONFRIED, "Paul and the Kingdom of God", 234.

<sup>13</sup> Similarly, B. WITHERINGTON, III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World. A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove, IL 1992) 56-57.

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, R.B. HAYS, *First Corinthians* (IBC; Louisville, KY 1997) 264-265; R.F. COLLINS, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, MN 1999) 549-550; A.C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI 2000) 1232-1233; W. SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (EKK 7/4; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2001) IV, 172-175; FITZMYER, *First Corinthians*, 568.

<sup>15</sup> For the Markan development of this theme, see R.E. WATTS, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (WUNT II/88; Tübingen 1997) 137-182.



in this passage <sup>16</sup>. The quest for Paul's relation to Jesus' proclamation regarding God's kingly rule may therefore fruitfully be undertaken by tracing the theme of Christ's triumph in Paul's letters.

Paul's most sustained development of this theme is found in chapters 5–8 of the letter to the Romans, a section that concludes with a doxology that centers around God's triumph over all evil forces. Even though the term βασιλεία is not used here, Paul's use of the cognate verb βασιλεύω is concentrated in this section of Romans. Six of the nine occurrences of this verb in the undisputed Pauline letters are found in these chapters. The other three occurrences may also be associated with the "kingdom of God" theme. In 1 Cor 15,25, the verb refers to Jesus' reign "until he has put all his enemies under his feet". In 1 Cor 4,8, the verb occurs twice when Paul describes the Corinthians' misguided belief that they are already experiencing the eschatological blessing of ruling as kings. That the verb rather than the noun is used is not surprising. Paul predominantly uses the noun in the static sense ("kingdom"), so the verb may lend itself better to express the dynamic concept of kingly rule.

As the terminological links are limited to the use of the cognates βασιλεία and βασιλεύω, the connection to the Jesus tradition is easy to miss. But the conceptual overlap is considerable. While Paul does not refer to the kingly rule as God's rule, he explains that "grace might rule (βασιλεύσῃ) through righteousness" (5,21). Here, "grace" functions almost metonymously as a reference to God, or maybe even to Christ <sup>17</sup>. Much like "kingdom of God" in the Jesus tradition, "grace" represents God's intervention in this world. "Grace" is perceived as a dynamic power that may be said to rule, but also a sphere or domain that has to be understood spatially, much like the term "kingdom of God" also functions, especially in the parables about entrance into the kingdom. In Rom 5,2, Paul affirms that "we have access by faith to this grace in which we stand". In Rom 6,14, Paul refers to the Romans as "not under law but under grace". "Grace" is then the power by which the Romans are controlled, but also the domain in which they find themselves.

<sup>16</sup> Those who have studied the influence of the Jesus tradition on Paul usually ignore this connection, but see J.D.G. DUNN, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B; Dallas, TX 1988) 822; WENHAM, *Follower*, 73. The reason for this omission seems to be the tendency to focus on Pauline allusions to specific elements of Jesus' teaching to the neglect of the broader lines of continuity between the major theological themes in Jesus and Paul; see, e.g., V.P. FURNISH, "The Jesus-Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann", *Paul and Jesus*. Collected Essays (ed. A.J.M. WEDDERBURN) (JSNTSup 37; Sheffield 1989) 46, 50.

<sup>17</sup> N.T. WRIGHT, "The Letter to the Romans", *NIB* 10:530, observes that "'grace' is a periphrastic (or indirect) personification for 'God'". U. WILCKENS, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKK 6/1; Zürich 1978) I.330, notes that "Christ" and "grace" are identical.

In addition to Jesus' ousting of the demons, the Synoptic Gospels also point to the presence of the new creation as the sign that the kingly rule of God is coming. In his answer to John the Baptist, Jesus alludes to several Isaianic prophecies about the new creation (Isa 26,19; 29,18; 35,5-6; 42,7.18; 61,1): "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them" (Luke 7,22 par.)<sup>18</sup>.

The theme of new creation informs much of the argument in Romans 5–8 as well. Christ brings reconciliation (5,10), which in 2 Cor 5,17-19 is related to new creation. He is portrayed as the last Adam who brings a new reality that is even greater than the original state of creation (5,15-21)<sup>19</sup>. As a result of their union with his resurrection, believers walk in newness of life (6,4). Consequently, Paul assures the Roman believers of their future participation in the glory of the new creation (Rom 8,18-25).

### III. PAUL'S ETHICAL INTERPRETATION OF GOD'S KINGLY RULE

Paul develops the concept of God's kingly rule by focusing on the believers' participation in this rule. They enjoy the fact that "those who receive the overwhelming grace and gift of righteousness [will] exercise their kingly rule (βασιλεύουσιν) in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (Rom 5,17). The Jesus of the double tradition also promises his disciples that "you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22,30 par.). It is possible that Paul is dependent upon this tradition, but, in any case, he uses the idea of the believers' rule to make a more distinctly ethical point. He urges the Romans not to "let sin exercise its kingly rule (βασιλευέτω) in your mortal bodies" (Rom 6,12).

Even though Paul falls short of describing the believers' participation in Christ's resurrection as a past event, he provides them with a self-understanding by which they are to see themselves as already participating in it. His rhetoric may be compared to that of 1 Corinthians, where he tells the Corinthians to understand their status in light of their new, eschatological identity in Christ, as opposed to the status they enjoy in this world: "For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person

<sup>18</sup> See further S. GRINDHEIM, *God's Equal. What Can We Know About Jesus' Self-Understanding?* (LNTS 446; London 2011) 43-53; IDEM, *Christology in the Synoptic Gospels. God or God's Servant?* (London 2012) 46-47.

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, E. KÄSEMANN, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI 1980) 155; T.R. SCHREINER, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 267.

belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ" (1 Cor 7,22). Similarly, in Rom 6,13 he tells the Romans to understand themselves as already taking part in Christ's victory over death: "No longer present your members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members to God as weapons of righteousness" <sup>20</sup>. Calling them "as being alive from the dead" (ὥσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας), Paul encourages the believers to consider Christ's resurrection as their own, even though it is not yet their tangible experience <sup>21</sup>. Their proleptic participation in the resurrection means that Christ's victory over death and evil can be manifested in their earthly lives.

With a most imaginative use of metaphor, Paul assures the Romans that they not only share in Christ's victory, but that they are the weapons by which this victory is won. Their members, or the parts of their body, may serve as weapons of righteousness. The genitive is probably best understood as a subjective genitive, so that the meaning is "weapons wielded by righteousness" <sup>22</sup>. "Righteousness", we have been told, is the means of Christ's victory and present kingly rule, as the kingly rule of death has been replaced by the kingly rule (βασιλεύση) of grace "through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5,21).

In the Synoptic Gospels, the military victory that inaugurates the kingly rule of God is a triumph over demonic forces (Luke 11,20 par.). The victory that is in view in Romans 5–8 is also a cosmic victory, a victory over evil, spiritual forces that stand against God's people. It has frequently been observed that sin is personified in these chapters. Sin entered the world (5,12); sin ruled (5,21; 6,12.14); it is a slave-master (6,6.14.16.17.18.20.22; 7,14) and pays wages (6,23); like a military leader it seizes an opportunity

<sup>20</sup> There is a military image in this verse. Whereas ὅπλα may refer to a broad range of tools, it is elsewhere in the NT only used for military weapons (2 Cor 6,7; 10,4; Rom 13,12; John 18,3), as it is also frequently used in the LXX (e.g., 1 Kgdms 17,7; 3 Kgdms 10,17; 14,26.27; 2 Chron 21,3; Ps 45,10; Prov 14,7; Joel 2,8; Nah 3,3; Jer 28,12). Similarly, O. MICHEL, *Der Brief an die Römer* (KEK; Göttingen <sup>5</sup>1966) 209; KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 177; R. JEWETT, *Romans. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2007) 410.

<sup>21</sup> MICHEL, *Römer*, 209-210, observes: "ὥσεὶ ist also nicht nur Bild und Vergleich, sondern auch Begründung und nähere Bestimmung".

<sup>22</sup> Similarly, JEWETT, *Romans*, 411. The genitive constructions contrast with the preceding ὅπλα ἀδικίας, which in turn continues the idea from v. 12: "do not let sin rule in your mortal body [...]". The image is that of sin as an agent. When the synonym ἀδικία is employed, it is most naturally understood as continuing this idea, so that ὅπλα ἀδικίας draws attention to the means by which injustice rules: the weapons it yields. This understanding does better justice to the flow of Paul's thought than the suggestion that the genitive is objective, denoting the purpose for which the weapons are used (*pace* D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1996] 386).

(7,8.11); it was dead, but came to life (7,8b-9); it works death (7,13); and it dwells in a person (7,17.20). The implications of this language have been thoroughly discussed in Pauline scholarship. Since the work of Martin Dibelius, many interpreters have maintained that Paul understands sin as a cosmic or demonic power<sup>23</sup>.

However, the mere fact that sin is personified does not warrant the conclusion that it is a demonic power. Paul's phraseology may be a literary device, a figure of speech for human passions that get the better of a person. One may compare this with Philo's observations in *Deus* 111-112, that those whose character is "full to the brim of folly and incontinence and cowardice, and injustice and impiety and other innumerable plagues" have "been sold in slavery to that chief cateress of our compound nature, Pleasure"<sup>24</sup>.

Paul sees sin not only as personified, but also as forming an alliance with death, as it exercises a dominion that is manifested in death (Rom 5,21)<sup>25</sup>. That sin ruled "in death" (ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ) may be understood instrumentally ("sin ruled by means of death"), spatially ("sin ruled in the realm of death"), or as an accompanying circumstance or result ("sin ruled with death as coregent" and/or "sin ruled, resulting in death")<sup>26</sup>. In light of 5,12, the last option seems the most likely: sin ruled and brought death with it. Death is the ultimate enemy of human beings (1 Cor 15,26), and

<sup>23</sup> M. DIBELIUS, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus* (Göttingen 1909) 119-124. Regarding Rom 7,14-25, KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 204, maintains that "the I who speaks here is demonically enslaved" (similarly, G. STÄHLIN – W. GRUNDMANN, "ἁμαρτάνω κτλ", *TDNT* I, 311). N.T. WRIGHT, "Romans", 530, takes "sin" to be "an indirect way of saying 'Satan'". R. BULTMANN, *Theology of the New Testament I* (London 1952) 245, understands "flesh and sin as powers to which man has fallen victim and against which he is powerless", while he insists that this is not a mythological concept, but figurative, rhetorical language (similarly, E. BRANDENBURGER, *Adam und Christus. Exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Röm. 5,12-21 [1.Kor 15]* [WMANT 7; Neukirchen 1962] 186). Commenting on Rom 7,17, J.D.G. DUNN, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38; Dallas, TX 1988) 390, provides a psychological explanation of sin: "a power exercising great compulsion on the individual, but sometimes more easily conceptualized as a force bearing upon one from without (social pressures, constraints of tradition, etc.), at others as a force rising up from within (psychological addiction of ingrained habit, hereditary traits, etc.)".

<sup>24</sup> E. WASSERMAN, *The Death of the Soul in Romans 7. Sin, Death, and the Law in Light of Hellenistic Moral Psychology* (WUNT II/256; Tübingen 2008) 83, argues that "[t]he role of sin in Rom 7 and elsewhere in chapters 6-8 fits with Platonic traditions that represent the passions and desires of the soul as an evil ruler that wrests control of reason to disastrous ends".

<sup>25</sup> C.C. BLACK, "Pauline Perspectives on Death in Romans 5-8", *JBL* 103 (1984) 421.

<sup>26</sup> For the clause as instrumental, see MICHEL, *Römer*, 193; C.K. BARRETT, *The Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; Rev. ed.; London 1991) 111; for a spatial sense, see KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 158; WILCKENS, *Römer*, I, 329; MOO, *Romans*, 349; SCHREINER, *Romans*, 296; for accompanying circumstance, see C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh 1975) I, 294.

it is counted among the many enemies that are defeated and rendered ineffective. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8,38-39). The categories are obviously meant to be exhaustive, including spiritual as well as political powers.

Scholarly discussions of Paul's personification of sin are often marred by the presupposition that the options are mutually exclusive: either "sin" refers to an external power or it describes human weakness<sup>27</sup>. I submit, however, that Paul would have seen these categories as complementary, and that his discourse on sin is designed in such a way that it combines a demonic and an ethical understanding of sin<sup>28</sup>. The concept of sin, as it is described in Romans 5–8, may be understood as a cosmic power, a slave master from which human beings can only be freed through death (cf. further below). However, it may simultaneously be understood psychologically, as a human condition that causes people to give in to their passions (6,12; 7,5).

This is Paul's contribution to the understanding of God's kingly rule: Christ's inauguration of God's kingly rule and defeat of the evil spirits manifests itself in ethical transformation<sup>29</sup>. The battle is apocalyptic, and the victory is ethical. The new rule is exercised by believers, as they "exercise their kingly rule in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (Rom 5,17)<sup>30</sup>. They no longer "let sin exercise its kingly rule in [their] mortal bodies" (Rom 6,12).

#### IV. HUMAN AND DEMONIC AGENCY IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

If Paul was able to operate simultaneously with psychological and demonic descriptions of sin, he fits broadly within the worldview of

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Jewett's argument against the demonic interpretation: "it is questionable whether demonic possession is the appropriate model for Paul's argument, because human assent to sin is the necessary precondition to being enslaved by it" (*Romans*, 467); similarly, H. RÄISÄNEN, *Paul and the Law* (WUNT 29; Tübingen 1983) 99; S.K. STOWERS, *A Rereading of Romans*. Justice, Jews, and Gentiles (New Haven, CT 1994) 180. Cf. also the discussion in B.N. KAYE, *The Thought Structure of Romans with Special Reference to Chapter 6* (Austin, TX 1979) 30-57.

<sup>28</sup> DIBELIUS, *Die Geisterwelt*, 124, concluded that Paul also provided a psychological account of sin and thereby prepared for the understanding that internal enemies were more dangerous than external enemies.

<sup>29</sup> Similarly, WITHERINGTON, *End*, 74.

<sup>30</sup> Similarly, KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 165.

Second Temple Judaism. There was a wide spectrum of views regarding the interplay between human and demonic forces, but they all seem to have shared one presupposition: demonic influence and human agency were not mutually exclusive explanations for human behavior.

On one end of the spectrum, we have the Treatise on the Two Spirits, which is found in the *Community Rule* (ca 100 BCE) from Qumran. It expresses a deterministic outlook: “And in the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all the sons of justice; they walk on paths of light. And in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is total dominion over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness” (1QS 3,20-21; cf. 4Q286 7.ii.5-6).

However, such fatalistic statements stand alongside other passages that presuppose a role for human initiative. The way in which human beings may protect themselves against the influence and control of Belial is to join the Community. To do so is described as to “submit freely to his truth” (1QS 1,11), and those who do so will be able to stand against Belial’s evil dominion: “And all those who enter in the Rule of the Community shall establish a covenant before God in order to carry out all that he commanded and in order not to stray from following him out of any fear, dread, or testing (that might occur) during the dominion of Belial” (1QS 1,16-18; cf. CD 16,4-5). Accordingly, the members vow: “I shall not retain Belial within my heart” (1QS 10,21).

On the opposite end of the spectrum, one finds the Hellenistic views of *4 Maccabees* (first century CE). The work repeatedly affirms that “devout reason is sovereign over the emotions”<sup>31</sup>. One might expect that a work whose purpose it is to portray the Jewish faith as the true philosophy (5,35; 7,7.9.21; 8,1.15) has little room for demonic activity in its world-view. However, the strong affirmation of self-control by means of reason does not rule out the influence of personal, evil powers. The devil was a threat to lead the mother of the seven sons astray, but she withstood him and exclaimed: “No seducer of the desert nor deceiver in the field corrupted me, nor did the seducing and beguiling serpent defile my maidenly purity” (18,8)<sup>32</sup>.

In much of the literature, the very presence of sin and evil in the world is often associated with the fall of the Watchers. This disastrous event is often described as a case of corrupting influence. According to *The Book of Watchers* (1 *Enoch* 1–37; second century BCE), the Watchers taught

<sup>31</sup> *4 Macc.* 1,1.3.5.6.7.9.13.14.19.30.31.32.33.34.35 etc.

<sup>32</sup> Some scholars have considered this passage to be an interpolation. H. ANDERSON, “4 Maccabees”, *OTP* II,532, argues for its integrity.

their evil ways to the humans, including magical practices (7,1; 8,1), to make instruments of war (8,1), all forms of oppression (9,6), and the secrets of heaven (10,7); “every (kind of) sin” was revealed by them (9,8). In the book of *Jubilees* (second century BCE), Noah explains to his grandsons that “the demons have begun to mislead you and your children” (7,27; cf. 10,2; 15,31). The teaching of the Watchers led humans “to observe the omens of the sun and the moon and stars within all the signs of heaven” (8,3). The stories in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* offer a neat account for the interrelationship between demonic and human agents: human beings are responsible for their sinful acts, which they have learned from the demons. This focus on learned behavior corresponds to the view of salvation as dependent on the imparting of divine wisdom, so that the faithful will learn to obey the law of God according to its correct interpretation.

Throughout the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (second century BCE), human decision and demonic influence are both seen to determine the lives of human beings<sup>33</sup>. Demonic activity is pervasive. According to the *Testament of Reuben*, seven spirits of error are responsible for the various human vices (*T. Reub.* 3,2-7). Dan even reports that he heard a demon speak to him (*T. Dan* 1,7). Such demonic activity explains the brothers’ jealousy of Joseph (*T. Sim.* 2,7; *T. Gad* 1,9), but these explanations are presented alongside psychological reflections: their father’s favoritism provoked them (*T. Sim.* 2,6; *T. Gad* 1,8)<sup>34</sup>.

The ultimately deciding factor, however, is the human will. When the testaments turn to discussing the remedy for human sinfulness, this much becomes clear. While the triumph over the demons is due to God’s protection (*T. Zeb.* 9,8; *T. Dan* 5,10-11), it is also clear that it lies within human capacity to withstand evil and show undivided commitment to the Lord. When people do this, the demons will flee from them (*T. Iss.* 7,7; *T. Dan* 5,1; *T. Naph.* 8,4; *T. Benj.* 5,2; cf. also *T. Sim.* 6,2,6; *T. Ash.* 3,2). The view of the interrelationship between human and spiritual forces is summarized well in the *Testament of Asher*:

The two ways are good and evil; concerning them are two dispositions within our breasts that choose between them. If the soul wants to follow the good way, all of its deeds are done in righteousness and every sin is immediately repented. Contemplating just deeds and rejecting wickedness, the soul overcomes evil and uproots sin. But if the mind is disposed toward evil, all of its deeds are wicked; driving out the good, it accepts the evil and is

<sup>33</sup> Similarly, WASSERMAN, *Death of the Soul*, 85.

<sup>34</sup> The dangers of promiscuity are also frequently attributed to demonic influence (*T. Reub.* 4,6-7; *T. Sim.* 5,3; *T. Jud.* 13,3; 14,2).



overmastered by Beliar, who, even when good is undertaken, presses the struggle so as to make the aim of his action into evil, since the devil's storehouse is filled with the venom of the evil spirit (1,5-9; cf. also *T. Jud.* 20,1-2; *T. Naph.* 2,6; *T. Gad* 5,3; *T. Benj.* 6,1-2).

The ultimate example that shows the power of human commitment is that of Joseph, who was able to withstand the temptation of promiscuity and all other demonic schemes (*T. Reub.* 4,9b-11; *T. Jos.* 9,5; *T. Benj.* 3,3-4)<sup>35</sup>.

With its naive and unorthodox description of demons, the *Testament of Solomon* (first to third century CE, in its earliest form from the first century) probably represents more marginal views. It details the many functions of demons, including to bring sickness, suffering, and disaster, such as infant mortality (13,3-4) and waves on the sea (16,2). Many of their afflictions are also of a spiritual and ethical nature, and many demons attack families. Asmodeus explains: "I am always hatching plots against newlyweds; I mar the beauty of virgins and cause their hearts to grow cold" (5,7; cf. also 7,5; 18,15.22.38). Numerous demons are also occupied with creating war, oppression, and disharmony in society (5,7; 8,6.7.8.10; 18,16), as well as heresies and false religion (8,5,9; 25,3-4). The *Testament of Solomon* does not make any clear distinction between physical and spiritual destruction; they are all related and caused by various demons (cf. 20,13).

The activities of the respective demons are thwarted by invoking the name of the angel that binds them, and Solomon's ring imprisons all the demons (1,7). It would appear, therefore, that the *Testament of Solomon* sees human beings almost as marionettes that are bound to play out what external forces compel them to do. The outlook appears to be magical and mechanistic, but that is only part of the picture. Its almost fatalistic view is combined with an ethical approach. Solomon lost all his powers after he fell in love with a beautiful Shummanite woman and agreed to sacrifice five locusts in the name of Rapham and Molech in order to have her (26,1-8). Evidently, the magical powers of his ring depended upon his undivided allegiance to the God of Israel. The powers of external forces and the effects of genuine religious and ethical choices are closely intermingled.

Paul's worldview may therefore be seen to fit broadly within Hellenistic Judaism, where two accounts of human existence are maintained simultaneously: an ethical theory that emphasized human responsibility and a view of external, spiritual forces that control human activity.

<sup>35</sup> See also the examples of Reuben (*T. Reub.* 4,4) and Simeon (*T. Sim.* 3,4-5).



Across this wide spectrum of views on the demonic world, one presupposition is constant: no matter how pervasive the influence of demons, their activities do not rule out human, ethical responsibility. Demonic explanations and ethical explanations of human behavior are apparently viewed to be complementary and not mutually exclusive. Paul's view must be understood in this context, but in one respect he stands out: he integrates the two perspectives. Rather than alternate between references to sin and to the demons, Paul speaks of sin in such a way that it may simultaneously be understood as an external power and as human depravity (which may be why he abstains from using terms like "demon" or "Satan")<sup>36</sup>.

## V. THE VICTORY

When it comes to the remedy for demonic influence, Paul's views differ from the Jewish views surveyed above. Whereas the literature from Second Temple Judaism tends to ascribe the victory over demons to an act of human volition, such as repentance, Paul focuses on the work of Christ, the last Adam. Christ has single-handedly brought an end to the dominion of death: "Therefore, just as one man's transgression affected all human beings and led to condemnation, so did one man's righteous act affect all human beings and led to justification and life" (Rom 5,18).

This view of Jesus as the exclusive agent of triumph over evil is shared by the Synoptic Gospels, in which Jesus alone is the one who defeats Satan and his army. There is an important difference, however, regarding the events that trigger the kingly rule of God. In the Synoptic Gospels, God's kingly rule comes through the earthly ministry of Jesus, particularly by his casting out of demons (Luke 11,20 par.; cf. Mark 1,15; Luke 10,9,11; 16,16; 17,21). As Jesus is nearing his death, he announces a future kingly rule or kingdom, but he does not explicitly tie the coming of this kingdom to his death and/or resurrection. It is rather the parousia that appears to be the time of the kingdom (Mark 14,25 par.; cf. Luke 19,11-27; 21,31; 22,30; 23,42).

In contrast, Paul makes no obvious connection between Jesus' earthly life and his inauguration of the kingdom. Instead, the kingly rule of grace is brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ<sup>37</sup>. When

<sup>36</sup> For objections to the demonic interpretation, see STOWERS, *Romans*, 182, and WAS-SERMAN, *Death of the Soul*, 85.

<sup>37</sup> Similarly, J.M.G. BARCLAY, "Jesus and Paul", *DPL*, 500.

Paul in Rom 5,18-19 attributes the victory over sin and death to Christ's righteous act and obedience, this act must primarily refer to his death. The preceding passage describes the giving of Jesus' life for sinners (5,6-8.10), the subsequent passage refers to believers' union with him in his death and resurrection (6,2-5), and the use of righteousness language echoes the description of Christ's death in 3,24-26 <sup>38</sup>.

While the saving and even sacrificial interpretation of Christ's death probably predated Paul <sup>39</sup>, Paul's special contribution seems to have been that he more explicitly explained the death of Christ as a triumph. Accordingly, the triumph of believers was seen in their participation in this death.

The Synoptic Gospels also reflect the idea that the disciples have a share in Christ's victory. However, this sharing is not directly tied to Jesus' death. The disciples share in Jesus' powers over evil by performing their works "in Jesus' name". In his name, they suffer persecution (Matt 10,22; 24,9), welcome a child (Matt 18,5), leave family and possessions (Matt 19,29), and come together as community (Matt 18,20). Even false disciples cast out demons, perform powerful deeds, and prophesy in his name (Matt 7,22), and in his name false messiahs will come (Matt 24,5).

Romans 6 serves to advance Paul's argument from the description of Christ's victory on behalf of his people to a description of the manifestation and application of this victory in the life of believers <sup>40</sup>. That Christ's victory results in the actual rule of his people has already been stated in Rom 5,17, with the phrase "how much more will those who receive the overwhelming grace and gift of righteousness exercise their kingly rule in life through the one man, Jesus Christ".

In Rom 6,6, Paul explains the purpose of believers' union with Christ: "This is what we know: that our old person was co-crucified, so that the body of sin might be retired, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin". Paul's argument presupposes that baptism unites believers with Christ to such an extent that they are included in his death and resurrection. What his death accomplished therefore belongs to them. With a brilliant legal metaphor, he then explains the effects of this death vis-a-vis the enslaving power of sin: "the one who died has been justified from sin" (6,7). Several commentators suggest that the meaning of this phrase has to do with freedom from the power of sin, but that is a strange meaning for the

<sup>38</sup> So correctly KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 156; WILCKENS, *Römer*, I, 326; DUNN, *Romans 1-8*, 283; MOO, *Romans*, 344; JEWETT, *Romans*, 386; *contra* CRANFIELD, *Romans*, I, 289.

<sup>39</sup> See especially M. HENGEL, *The Atonement. The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA 1981) 47-75.

<sup>40</sup> KAYE, *Thought Structure*, 14-23.

expression δικαιοῦν ἀπό<sup>41</sup>. This expression is also found in Sir 26,29; *T. Sim.* 6,1; Acts 13,39 where it has connotations of freedom from guilt<sup>42</sup>.

The point in Rom 6,7 must therefore be that there are no longer any valid legal claims that can be launched against someone who is dead. The logic becomes clearer in the similar analogy that Paul applies in Rom 7,1-3. The dead husband no longer has any legal claim on his wife. The point is not to describe the end of the husband's power over his wife. Paul's concern is specifically with legal claims. As long as the husband is alive, the wife will have the legal status of an adulteress if she becomes the wife of someone else. Death nullifies such claims and accusations. When this logic is applied to the understanding of sin as a slave master, the conclusion is that the legal status of the believer has changed. The believer is no longer under the rule of sin. Sin exercised a dominion that resulted in death (5,21), but when death has occurred, this dominion is terminated. All the legal claims of sin have been met<sup>43</sup>.

The presupposition for Paul's whole argument is the concept of a heavenly courtroom, a forum in which the fate of human beings is decided. In Rom 3,21 – 4,25, Paul has explained that believers have been granted a new legal status before God. In Rom 5,1 – 8,38, he turns to the ramifications of this justification as it concerns the cosmic enemies of God's people. They have now suffered their legal defeat. They no longer have a case.

<sup>41</sup> KÄSEMANN, *Romans*, 170; DUNN, *Romans 1–8*, 321; MOO, *Romans*, 377; SCHREINER, *Romans*, 319.

<sup>42</sup> Sir 26,29 is translated well in the NRSV: "A merchant can hardly keep from wrongdoing, nor is a tradesman innocent of sin (οὐ δικαιοθήσεται κάπηλος ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας)". The point is not that a tradesman is bound by the power of sin, but that he has no legal claim to be without sin. *T. Sim.* 6,1 is even clearer: "See, I have told you everything, so that I might be exonerated with regard to your sin (ὅπως δικαιοθῶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν)". Simeon washes his hands of the future guilt of his descendants. In Acts 13,38-39, Paul tells the Israelites in Pisidian Antioch: "through him, the forgiveness of sins is announced to you, and from all the things which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses — in him everyone who believes is justified". The parallel between justification and forgiveness shows that what is in view is the guilt of sin. *Herm. Vis.* 3.9.1 is inconclusive.

<sup>43</sup> Similarly, U. WILCKENS, *Römer* (EKK 6/2; Zürich<sup>2</sup>1987) II.17-18; BLACK, "Perspectives on Death", 423; M.A. SEIFRID, *Christ, Our Righteousness*. Paul's Theology of Justification (New Studies in Biblical Theology 9; Leicester 2000) 72-73. CRANFIELD, *Romans*, I, 310-311, objects that Paul would not agree that death brings atonement from sin in relation to God. However, in this passage Paul does not discuss death in relation to God, but in relation to sin. Death is the conclusion of sin's dominion. The point is not atonement, implying forgiveness and restoration, but that the legal ramifications of sin have been exhausted.

This heavenly, legal perspective on the believers' situation is the topic of Rom 6,3-10. In Rom 6,11-23, Paul then shifts to a psychological perspective and exhorts believers to live according to their new status. Paul's perspective may be compared to the views reflected in the Jewish literature surveyed above. The predominant thought was that people had to resist the evil spirits, and then they might be defeated. Paul's conviction is that the reign of sin has already been terminated, and that the believers therefore can and must resist it.

## VI. ROMANS 14,17

That Paul understands the kingly rule of God as exercised through the believers' victory over sin is confirmed in the only occurrence of the term βασιλεία in the Letter to the Romans. This occurrence is found in the section in which Paul addresses the conflict over food laws (14,1 – 15,6). Paul calls the believers to abstain from using their freedom to eat whatever they want: “for the kingly rule of God (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (14,17) <sup>44</sup>. This is one of only two instances in the undisputed letters in which Paul clearly views the kingdom or kingly rule of God as a present reality. (The other instance is 1 Cor 4,20, which makes a similar point.)

His language is illustrative of how he understands the nature of God's kingly rule. It is manifested in the new ethical reality that has been established through the proclamation of the gospel <sup>45</sup>. It stands in direct contrast to any attitude that values dietary freedom more highly than the well-being of other believers <sup>46</sup>. No one must think that the condition associated with the kingly rule of God consists in the pleasures of eating and drinking. The new reality that exists under the kingly rule of God is shown in righteousness, peace, and joy. These are the qualities that are imparted by Paul's gospel, as he explains at critical junctures in his

<sup>44</sup> Most versions and commentaries translate the term βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as “kingdom of God” here, but Jewett correctly observes that it refers “to the church realm where God presently reigns” (JEWETT, *Romans*, 863).

<sup>45</sup> Similarly, U. WILCKENS, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKK 6/3; Zürich 1982) III.93-94; DUNN, *Romans 9-16*, 823; J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York 1993) 697; MOO, *Romans*, 857. G. HAUFÉ, “Reich Gottes”, 470, finds in Rom 14,17 a description of the gifts of salvation, love and mercy, corresponding to Jesus' extolling of these virtues.

<sup>46</sup> Similarly, C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh 1979) II.717-718; JEWETT, *Romans*, 863.

Letter to the Romans. The theme of the letter concerns the righteousness of God (1,17), a righteousness which is granted by faith, not by works of the law (3,21 – 4,25). As a result, those who are justified enjoy peace with God (5,1), and Paul concludes his ethical exhortations with a prayer that the believers may be filled with joy and peace (15,13). “Righteousness and peace and joy” therefore summarize the effects of his gospel as it is received by human beings who believe it. Paul’s use of the term “kingdom of God” in Rom 14,17 shows that he is capable of using this term as a shorthand expression for the believers’ new existence under the grace of God. God’s kingly rule comes to expression through the new ethical life of believers, a life in which personal pleasure is of no value compared to acting out of concern for one’s fellow believer. It is a life in which the grace of God “might rule through righteousness” (Rom 5,21).

#### CONCLUSION

Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom has not been left by the wayside in Paul’s development of his theology. There appears to be a direct line from Jesus’ announcement of God’s decisive triumph as effective through his own ministry to the realized eschatology in Paul’s theology. Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom is reflected in 1 Cor 15,20-28 and is developed in an innovative way in Romans 5–8. Paul understands Christ’s victory as belonging to believers, and he interprets this victory as an ethical victory. Sin, the enemy that has been defeated, is described in such a way that it may simultaneously be understood as a demonic power and as an ethical failure. In accordance with the worldview of Second Temple Judaism, Paul operates with two complementary accounts of the human condition. Human failure is caused by the overpowering force of demonic beings, but it is also the result of personal choice.

Since these demonic forces have been handed their decisive defeat through the death and resurrection of Christ, believers are empowered to live their lives without giving in to the demons’ influence. Believers share in God’s kingly rule, a rule that is now manifested in their new ethical life and in the mastery of their passions.

## SUMMARY

It is commonly assumed that there is no direct connection between Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God and the theology of Paul. By inquiring after both conceptual and terminological links, however, this article argues that Jesus' teaching on the kingdom has left clear traces in Paul's writings. Jesus' proclamation of the present rule of God, manifested in his own victory over evil spirits, is given an ethical interpretation by Paul, who sees the kingly rule of God expressed in believers' victory over sin.

## «LA FOI AGISSANT PAR L'AMOUR» (GALATES 5,6)

### Justification par la foi et parénèse du jugement dans la lettre aux Galates

Depuis la seconde moitié du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'exégèse paulinienne est entrée dans l'œil du cyclone de la recherche <sup>1</sup>. C'est à la *New Perspective on Paul* <sup>2</sup> — courant multiforme qui dénonce, depuis une génération maintenant, la lecture confessionnelle infligée par la vulgate protestante à la correspondance de l'apôtre et la dégradation caricaturale du judaïsme en religion des œuvres — que l'on doit cette lame de fond qui agite, de proche en proche, l'ensemble des paramètres de l'interprétation paulinienne <sup>3</sup>, à commencer par l'articulation entre la foi et la Loi.

Pour ces «nouvelles approches» précisément, le détonateur de la justification par la foi ne serait pas la dramatique individuelle de la conscience chère à l'Occident chrétien depuis Augustin <sup>4</sup>, mais un péril prioritairement ou strictement ecclésiologique: la limitation du salut au seul bénéfice du peuple de la Torah. Dit autrement: la problématique sotériologique et hamartiologique qui taraudait la conscience du moine Martin (Comment Dieu peut-il se montrer gracieux? <sup>5</sup>) — assurément trop unilatérale — a été, dans l'exégèse récente, très souvent supplantée par un autre questionnement, de nature prioritairement sociologique et éthique (Si les païens sont intégrés au peuple de Dieu, comment et à quelles conditions? <sup>6</sup>). Dans cette configuration nouvelle, on s'en doute, l'articulation entre la

<sup>1</sup> A ce sujet: M. ZETTERHOLM, *Approaches to Paul. A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Minneapolis, MN 2009) 95-126 (ch. 4: «Toward a New Perspective on Paul») et 127-163 (ch. 5: «Beyond the New Perspective»).

<sup>2</sup> Ont promu ce courant exégétique: K. STENDAHL, «The Apostle Paul and the Intropective Conscience of the West», *HTR* 56 (1963) 199-215; E.P. SANDERS, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia, PA 1977); IDEM, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, PA 1983); J.D.G. DUNN, *The New Perspective on Paul. Collected Essays* (WUNT 185; Tübingen 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. D. MARGUERAT, «Introduction» et M. QUESNEL, «État de la recherche sur Paul: questions en débat et enjeux sous-jacents», *Paul, une théologie en construction* (éds. A. DETTWILER – J.-D. KAESTLI – D. MARGUERAT) (MoBi 51; Genève 2004) 9-21; 25-44.

<sup>4</sup> STENDAHL, «The Apostle Paul», 199-215.

<sup>5</sup> STENDAHL, «The Apostle Paul», 203: «How can I find a gracious God?».

<sup>6</sup> STENDAHL, «The Apostle Paul», 204, qui résume les questions fondamentales pour Paul ainsi: «1) What happens to the Law [...] when the Messiah has come? What are the ramifications of the Messiah's arrival for the relation between Jews and Gentiles?». Voir également DUNN, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 27.

justification par la foi et la parénèse du jugement a été, elle aussi, affectée. En effet: si les «œuvres de la Loi» ne sont plus l'expression d'une sotériologie du mérite mais bien davantage la concrétion — au cœur d'un débat socio-identitaire — d'un *modus vivendi* exclusif, alors la section éthique des lettres de Paul n'est plus à dégrader en marge de sa pensée, mais constitue au contraire l'un des enjeux centraux de son écriture. Une observation déjà faite par John Barclay en 1988 dans l'introduction à sa thèse de doctorat portant précisément sur la parénèse de Galates (5,13 – 6,10) <sup>7</sup>.

Une monographie, en particulier, reflète (sans lui être totalement assimilable) le déplacement de paradigme intervenu: *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* de Francis Watson. Parue initialement en 1986 <sup>8</sup>, elle a connu une seconde édition fortement révisée en 2007 <sup>9</sup>. Dans cette publication, Watson opte pour une approche prioritairement sociologique des lettres de Paul, considérant son discours théologique comme la justification secondaire apportée à l'émancipation des pagano-chrétiens hors de l'orbite du judaïsme. Relue dans cette perspective, l'opposition entre la foi et les œuvres n'évolue plus sur un axe vertical «Dieu–homme» mais sur un axe horizontal «Église–Synagogue»; ce sont deux modes de vie communautaire, faits de pratiques et de croyances, qui s'opposeraient à l'occasion de la crise galate. En clair: l'Évangile défendu par l'apôtre serait moins affaire de théologie et de salut que de sociologie et d'éthique, la foi représentant pour Watson une «radicale réorientation sociale» et «un engagement en faveur de normes chrétiennes de comportement» <sup>10</sup>.

Sans aller aussi loin, l'exégète écossais James Dunn, incontournable artisan et porte-parole de la *New Perspective*, déplace, lui aussi, le centre de gravité de la pensée paulinienne de la justification par la foi en direction de la sanctification du croyant. C'est sans conteste ce «processus de salut», engagé au cœur de la communauté ecclésiale et où l'agir du baptisé est sollicité face à l'urgence du Jugement dernier, qui se taille la part du lion dans sa *Theology of Paul the Apostle* <sup>11</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J.M.G. BARCLAY, *Obeying the Truth. A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh 1988) 8.

<sup>8</sup> F. WATSON, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles. A Sociological Approach* (MSSNTS 56; Cambridge 1986).

<sup>9</sup> F. WATSON, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles. Beyond the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, UK 2007).

<sup>10</sup> F. WATSON, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles* (2007) 122 (notre traduction).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. le chapitre 6 intitulé «The Process of Salvation» ainsi que les chapitres 7 («The Church») et 8 («How Should Believers Live?») de J.D.G. DUNN, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh 1998). Dunn peut ainsi affirmer: «The character of the process of salvation [...] provides a theological foundation for a system of ethics.» (496). On retrouve des propos similaires dans DUNN, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 84: «The point [...]



On le voit, en réaction à une interprétation dite traditionnelle ou ancienne de Paul, l'exégèse néotestamentaire récente — singulièrement anglo-saxonne — a très souvent délaissé le terrain de la sotériologie et de l'eschatologie pour investir centralement les problématiques et questionnements ecclésiologiques, missionnaires et éthiques, y reconnaissant le foyer et l'axe structurant de la pensée paulinienne. Avec, certains le pensent, le risque d'un nouveau déséquilibre.

Pour ces différentes raisons, nous souhaitons, dans la suite de cette étude, rouvrir le dossier de la parénèse paulinienne. Et cela, afin d'en déterminer l'articulation à la sotériologie et à l'eschatologie. Dans le cadre limité de cet article, il ne sera toutefois pas possible d'offrir de cette délicate problématique un panorama exhaustif. C'est pourquoi nous avons choisi de cantonner notre enquête à l'épître aux Galates, probable lieu d'émergence de la justification par la foi et terrain de prédilection des partisans de la *New Perspective*. À la lecture de cette lettre, en effet, deux questions ont régulièrement capté l'attention des exégètes modernes. Primo: comment délimiter précisément la section parénétique de la missive? Secundo: quels statut et fonction lui reconnaître dans l'argumentation paulinienne? Très exactement, comment tenir ensemble le message d'une justification gratuite, centralement argumenté en Galates 1–4, et les appels répétés à un engagement éthique lus en Galates 5–6 et que le Dieu Juge viendra sanctionner à la fin des temps?

## I. HYPOTHÈSES ET DÉMARCHÉ

Commençons par retracer dans ses grandes lignes le contexte de communication de Galates<sup>12</sup>. Comme en témoigne le proème de la lettre (1,6–12), c'est à une prédication concurrente taxée de pseudo-Évangile (1,6–7) que Paul a affaire dans les Églises du centre de l'ancienne Turquie. La faute à qui? A ceux que l'apôtre qualifie, sans jamais les nommer, de perturbateurs (1,7: οἱ παράσσοντες ὑμᾶς; 5,10: ὁ δὲ παράσσων ὑμᾶς; 5,12: οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς). Des «trouble-fête» dont le portrait n'est pas aisé à recomposer, dans la mesure où il est médiatisé par le filtre déformant de

is that Paul envisaged salvation as a *process of transformation* of the believer, not simply of the believer's *status*, but of the *believer* as such. Final judgment will be the measure of that transformation. Central to the process is the believer's moral determination and obedience» (l'auteur souligne).

<sup>12</sup> Nous résumons ici des données collectées dans: J. FREY, «Galaterbrief», *Paulus. Leben – Umwelt – Werke – Briefe* (éd. O. WISCHMEYER) (Tübingen – Basel <sup>2</sup>2012) 232–256; F. VOUGA, «L'épître aux Galates», *Introduction au Nouveau Testament*. Son histoire, son écriture, sa théologie (éd. D. MARGUERAT) (MoBi 41; Genève <sup>4</sup>2008) 235–249.

Paul <sup>13</sup>. Cela dit, leur origine (proto-)chrétienne (cf. 1,6: ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον) ainsi que leur attachement à la circoncision (5,2.12; 6,12-13) constituent des solides points d'accord entre les exégètes modernes. Un rite et, plus largement, des observances mosaïques (cf. 4,21b: οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι; 5,4b: οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε) qui étaient probablement censés jouer, pour les prédicateurs à l'œuvre en Galatie comme pour d'autres courants du judaïsme antique <sup>14</sup>, un rôle majeur à l'échéance du Jugement (5,2.4), en conditionnant l'accès au Royaume <sup>15</sup>. Pour cette raison aussi, les païens, étrangers à l'alliance d'Israël, ne pouvaient espérer être sauvés au jour de la fin. Et cela, quand bien même ils avaient reçus à leur baptême l'onction de l'Esprit (3,1-5).

C'est dire que l'enjeu de la crise galate — sociologique en surface, comme le postule avec raison la *New Perspective* («Quel statut reconnaître aux pagano-chrétiens et comment les intégrer dans le peuple de Dieu?») — affecte en profondeur le salut et l'espérance dernière de la communauté croyante («Quelle posture existentielle adopter pour être sauvé au jour du Jugement?») <sup>16</sup>. Et c'est sous cet horizon théologique ultime qu'il s'agit de comprendre l'*ethos* fait de normes et de rites promu par les «avocats de la circoncision» <sup>17</sup> dans les Églises galates. Il y a là, selon nous, une dimension insuffisamment valorisée par les tenants des «nouvelles approches de Paul» et qui explique, en grande partie, la réplique livrée par l'apôtre face à cette situation de crise.

En effet, affrontant le péril galate, Paul va développer, pour la première fois dans sa correspondance, son enseignement sur la justification <sup>18</sup>, critiquant toute condition (ethnique, notamment) imposée au salut dernier et investissant à cet effet un langage à forte résonance eschatologique et forensique. C'est le propos que nous lisons dans les quatre premiers

<sup>13</sup> Pour une application du «mirror-reading» à Galates, ses risques et ses résultats, on se reportera à J.M.G. BARCLAY, «Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case», *JSNT* 31 (1987) 73-93. Notre lecture du front polémique de Galates s'en inspire.

<sup>14</sup> Ici et pour la suite S. GATHERCOLE, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids, MI 2002) en particulier les pages 37-194 et 263-264.

<sup>15</sup> Ici et pour ce qui suit: M.F. BIRD, «Justification as Forensic Declaration and Covenant Membership. A *Via Media* Between Reformed and Revisionist Readings of Paul», *Tyndale Bulletin* 57 (2006) 109-130.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. aussi B. WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia* (Edinburgh 1998) 184. Voir aussi la note précédente.

<sup>17</sup> Sur cette désignation: T. DONALDSON, «'The Gospel that I Proclaim among the Gentiles' (Gal 2.2): Universalistic or Israel-centered?», *Gospel in Paul. Studies on Corinthians, Galatians and Romans for Richard N. Longenecker* (éds. L.A. JERVIS – P. RICHARDSON) (JSNT.S 108; Sheffield 1994) 166.

<sup>18</sup> J. BECKER, *Paul. L'apôtre des nations* (Théologies bibliques; Paris – Montréal 1995) 337-354.

chapitres de Galates. Mais surtout, face à l'*ethos* thora-logique de ses opposants, il va ériger l'obéissance en lieu où se dévoile et se concrétise l'«espérance de la justification» (5,5) <sup>19</sup> — une justification certes reçue πνεύματι ἐκ πίστεως mais dans l'attente de sa validation ultime (cf. ἀπεκδεχόμεθα). C'est là l'enjeu des chapitres 5 et 6 de la lettre. Dit autrement: de part et d'autre de Galates, la nature de l'argumentation est centralement eschatologique. Pour Paul, la nouvelle créature forme un tout indissociable, engagé dans un processus de transformation situé entre baptême et parousie ou entre justification et Jugement dernier. Et surtout, un processus où la foi et l'amour, l'indicatif et l'impératif, l'esprit et le corps, ne sont pas disjoints mais organiquement liés (5,6). C'est dire également que l'éthique paulinienne ne peut être simplement traitée en termes de réponse à la grâce <sup>20</sup> et, par là même, dévaluée face au message proprement théologique de Galates — pas plus qu'elle ne peut s'autonomiser face à ce dernier. Pour Paul, au contraire, elle fait partie intégrante d'un seul et même événement de salut où l'être et le faire sont pareillement renouvelés par l'action de l'Esprit. Et toujours menacés par le péché, ses assauts sur le «moi» (cf. 5,17) se répercutant aussitôt sur l'agir (5,19a: φανερά δέ ἐστὶν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός). On l'aura compris: l'argumentation de Galates, dans ses parties théologique et éthique, est à considérer comme un tout organique, l'identité de l'individu justifié hors-la-Loi et appelé à comparaître face au Dieu Juge devant se traduire dans un *ethos* correspondant <sup>21</sup> — un *ethos* inclusif et réciproque et non dans une «vie à la juive» (cf. ἰουδαΐζειν en 2,14) ou dans tout autre mode de conduite qui garantirait un privilège *coram Deo*. Telle est l'hypothèse de lecture que nous nous proposons de développer et d'étayer dans la suite de cette étude.

Précisément, notre parcours s'organisera en trois étapes: tout d'abord, nous commencerons par circonscrire l'intention de communication attachée

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J.M.G. BARCLAY, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI 2015) 425: «Social practice is, for Paul, the necessary expression of the Christ-gift, and [...] non-competitive communities, ordered by a new calibration of worth, realize and help *define* the Christ-event as an unconditioned gift. 'The truth of the good news' (2:14) is ineffective unless it 'takes place' within communities whose behaviour instantiates its novelty» (l'auteur souligne).

<sup>20</sup> Ici et dans la suite M. KONRADT, «Die Christonomie der Freiheit. Zu Paulus' Entfaltung seines ethischen Ansatzes in Gal 5,13 – 6,10», *Early Christianity* 1 (2010) 72.

<sup>21</sup> C'est à BARCLAY (*Obeying the Truth*, 1988) que revient le mérite d'avoir démontré la corrélation entre théologie (ou idéologie) et éthique (ou sociologie) dans le cadre de la crise galate: «The issues at stake in the Galatian crisis were the *identity* of these Galatian Christians and their *appropriate patterns of behaviour*» (73, l'auteur souligne); et, en conséquence de quoi, leur intrication sous la plume de Paul. Plus récemment, lire aussi: R. HOPPE, «Paränese und Theologie im Galaterbrief — eine Profilskizze», *Umstrittener Galaterbrief. Studien zur Situierung und Theologie des Paulus-Schreibens* (éds. M. BACHMANN – B. KOLLMANN) (BTS 106; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2010) 207-230; BARCLAY, *Paul and the Gift*, 423-446.

à la missive, cherchant à recomposer — à l'examen de l'introduction et de la conclusion rhétoriques de Galates — la position adoptée par Paul dans ce débat. On questionnera ensuite les bornes de la séquence parénétique de l'écrit ainsi que l'enjeu argumentatif sous-jacent. Dans un troisième temps, c'est l'articulation du message sur la justification et de la parénèse du jugement dans ce contexte épistolaire qui sera au cœur de notre enquête.

## II. QU'EST-CE QUE L'HUMAIN? LA RÉPLIQUE DE PAUL AUX GALATES

Commençons par circonscrire la thèse adoptée par Paul dans ce litige. Les spécialistes de la littérature moderne nous ont rendus attentifs à ces lieux stratégiques d'une œuvre littéraire que sont l'*incipit* et la clôture <sup>22</sup> : s'y noue bien souvent un "pacte de lecture" entre destinataire(s) et destinataire(s). Un constat également valable pour la littérature antique. En effet : l'éloquence classique prévoyait dans la construction d'un discours (la fameuse *dispositio*) deux espaces à forte résonance herméneutique : l'exorde et la péroraison <sup>23</sup>.

Une organisation de l'argumentation à laquelle souscrit la correspondance de Paul, son écrit aux Galates en particulier. Pour sûr, voué à une «oralité seconde» <sup>24</sup> au sein des communautés destinataires, l'écrit a été, depuis les travaux pionniers de Hans Dieter Betz <sup>25</sup>, l'un des terrains de prédilection de la critique rhétorique appliquée à la littérature biblique. Une méthode qui, si elle a produit des résultats contrastés et sujets à d'immanquables débats <sup>26</sup>, a néanmoins permis l'identification de son introduction (l'*exordium*) et de sa conclusion (la *peroratio*). Précisément : l'exorde se lit en 1,6-12, alors que la péroraison couvre les vv. 12-17 du chapitre 6 <sup>27</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> D. MARGUERAT – Y. BOURQUIN, *La Bible se raconte*. Initiation à l'analyse narrative (Paris 2002) 158-160; M. TORGONICK, *Closure in the Novel* (Princeton, NJ 1981).

<sup>23</sup> A ce sujet et pour la suite : H.D. BETZ, *Galatians*. A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia (Philadelphia, PA 1979) 44-46, 312-313.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J.D. DUNN, *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, UK 2013), 52, qui définit ainsi l'oralité seconde : «a written text known only through oral performance of the text». L'ἄμην qui boucle la lettre en Ga 6,18 (cf. aussi 1,5) en offre, comme certains le pensent, une confirmation indirecte, reflétant sa réception initialement communautaire et liturgique.

<sup>25</sup> H.D. BETZ, «The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians», *NTS* 21 (1975) 353-379; IDEM, *Galatians*.

<sup>26</sup> À ce sujet : J.-P. LÉMONON, *L'épître aux Galates* (Paris 2008) 40-45.

<sup>27</sup> Par ex. : M. RASTOIN, *Tarse et Jérusalem*. La double culture de l'apôtre Paul en Galates 3,6 – 4,7 (Rome 2003) 33-40.

Cadre interprétatif du discours antique, ces deux espaces se devaient d'être construits en écho <sup>28</sup>. Sur ce point également, la lettre aux Galates ne fait pas exception. Quatre phénomènes de renvois (au moins) se reconnaissent entre l'*exordium* et la *peroratio* <sup>29</sup>:

1. de part et d'autre, l'apôtre livre un portrait *ad malam partem* des prédicateurs actifs dans les communautés galates (1,7b; 6,12-13), les accusant de soumettre l'Évangile à une logique coupable, par imposition de la circoncision notamment;
2. à ce portrait, il oppose son propre *ethos*, fortement christologique à chaque fois et détaché de tout principe humain ou mondain (1,10; 6,14.17b);
3. un modèle adossé à une logique nouvelle exprimée, de part et d'autre, à l'aide d'une même structure ternaire, la construction «ni..., ni..., mais» (1,12: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου παρέλαβον αὐτὸ οὔτε ἐδιδάχθην, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 6,15: οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.);
4. enfin, c'est l'horizon dernier face auquel sont situés les *ethos* en concurrence que Paul déploie: l'anathème sur ceux qui falsifient l'Évangile du Christ en le soumettant à la Loi et la circoncision (1,8b.9c: ἀνάθεμα ἔστω), la paix pour ceux qui, comme Paul, s'adossent à la «nouvelle création» (6,16b: εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ). *Tertium non datur*.

Eloquents, ces différents renvois intratextuels nous renseignent clairement sur l'enjeu reconnu par Paul à la crise galate et, surtout, sur la position qu'il adopte dans ce débat. Selon lui, les deux Évangiles en concurrence dans les Églises d'Anatolie — l'«Évangile du Christ» et l'«autre Évangile» propagé par les missionnaires étrangers (1,6-7) — s'ils s'expriment dans des modes de vie en compétition, trahissent plus fondamentalement des discours théologiques incompatibles. En témoigne la construction «ni..., ni..., mais...» rencontrée aux deux bornes de la lettre (1,12; 6,15). Pour Paul, la crise galate met en jeu une opposition théologique radicale, celle entre Dieu et l'humain (de nature anthropologique) ou entre la nouvelle création et l'ancien monde (de nature cosmologique) <sup>30</sup>.

C'est dire également que, pour l'apôtre, les codes et rites du judaïsme que les «avocats de la circoncision» introduisent dans les communautés galates n'ont pas uniquement pour effet de marginaliser socialement les

<sup>28</sup> BETZ, *Galatians*, 46: «*exordium* and *peroratio* were considered intimately related».

<sup>29</sup> Pour ce qui suit, lire: RASTOIN, *Tarse et Jérusalem*, 33-40.

<sup>30</sup> Ici et dans la suite, en particulier J.L. MARTYN, *Galatians* (AB 33A; New York 1997) 570-577. Aussi: F. VOUGA, *An die Galater* (HNT 10; Tübingen 1998) 7-8.

pagano-chrétiens. Le péril en jeu est plus grave : il est théologique, travestissant la relation de l'individu à son Dieu par soumission à une logique mondaine (cf. 1,10-12) — la logique des identités ethniques et des statuts sociaux, dont on sait qu'elle était centrale à la définition de l'homme antique<sup>31</sup>. Avec à la clé une sanction de nature eschatologique : la malédiction par Dieu ou la mort spirituelle de l'individu (2× ἀνάθεμα ἔστω en 1,8-9)<sup>32</sup>. Face à cette menace, l'unique moyen, pour l'apôtre, de juguler cette sanction et d'obtenir la récompense dernière (6,16b : εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ), c'est de s'aligner sur un « canon » existentiel (cf. 6,16a) sans compromis : la « croix de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ » (6,14a).

On le voit, si le détonateur du conflit galate est un problème éminemment socio-identitaire — le « statut officiel » des païens au sein de l'alliance abrahamique —, la réplique conduite par Paul en Galates adopte une orientation sotériologique et eschatologique<sup>33</sup> : c'est la construction de l'identité religieuse sous le signe de la fin — en particulier, son fondement et son *ethos* — qui occupe l'apôtre de part en part de sa lettre. « Qu'est-ce que l'humain face au Dieu Juge ? » : voilà en substance la question à laquelle Paul choisit d'apporter une réponse par l'écriture de sa missive. Seule la prise au sérieux de ces différents paramètres théologiques permet, à notre avis, de saisir l'unité et la cohérence de l'argumentation paulinienne face aux Galates.

### III. L'ÉMERGENCE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUR LA JUSTIFICATION

Nul hasard si, comme déjà dit, l'apôtre investit, face à cet horizon judiciaire et eschatologique, la thématique de la justification fondée sur la racine δικαί-<sup>34</sup>. Un investissement qui se reconnaît en particulier en 2,15-21, section souvent identifiée par les exégètes avec la *propositio* de Galates<sup>35</sup>. Nous avons là un langage, peut-être déjà exploité par les

<sup>31</sup> Avec S. VOLLENWEIDER, « Paul entre exégèse et histoire de la réception », *Paul, une théologie en construction* (éds. A. DETTWILER – J.-D. KAESTLI – D. MARGUERAT) (MoBi 51; Genève 2004) 451-452. Sur la construction identitaire de l'homme antique : B.J. MALINA – J.H. NEYREY, *Portraits of Paul. An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville, KY 1996) 153-201.

<sup>32</sup> Sur la rhétorique de la malédiction en Galates : K.A. MORLAND, *The Rhetoric of Curse in Galatians. Paul Confronts Another Gospel* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 5; Atlanta, GA 1995). Aussi BETZ, *Galatians*, 25 et 50-52.

<sup>33</sup> Avec M. WOLTER, *Paulus* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2008) 406. Voir aussi n. 16 ci-dessus.

<sup>34</sup> Ga 2,16(3×).17.21; 3,6.8.11(2×).21.24; 5,4.5. Voir aussi n. 15 supra.

<sup>35</sup> Initialement BETZ, *Galatians*, 113-114.

contradicteurs de l'apôtre actifs en Galatie <sup>36</sup> (cf. 5,4ab: κατηγορήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε), qui ressortit dans la tradition apocalyptique-juive et judéo-chrétienne au contexte du Jugement dernier <sup>37</sup>, signifiant l'acte par lequel Dieu justifie l'individu. Ce verdict, les prédicateurs de la circoncision le conditionnaient probablement au privilège garanti par la Torah mosaïque, alors que l'apôtre proclamait la justification gratuite de l'individu quel qu'il soit (en témoigne, en 2,16, l'emploi des catégories universelles ἄνθρωπος et πᾶσα σάρξ) et le sous-trayait par là même à la colère à venir.

Cela dit, si la justification par la foi reçoit en 2,15-21 une application de nature anthropologique, elle ne s'y réduit toutefois pas. Le cadre qui enserme la lettre aux Galates l'affiche clairement (cf. l'emploi des substantifs αἰών en 1,4b et κόσμος en 4,3c et 6,14b[2×]): selon Paul, la portée de l'événement Jésus Christ concerne autant l'histoire du monde que la condition humaine <sup>38</sup>. Ou mieux dit: c'est l'ensemble de ses droits sur le créé que le Dieu de la fin a rétabli par anticipation à la croix et qu'il scellera définitivement au jour de la parousie (cf. Käsemann). Bref, la transformation eschatologique inaugurée dans l'événement Jésus possède en Galates une portée à la fois personnelle et cosmique, sans oublier ses répercussions socio-ecclésiales exposées en 3,27-28.

Cela dit, comment la justification reçue dans l'acte du baptême s'articule-t-elle chez Paul avec l'échéance encore à venir du Jugement dernier? Examiné dans le cadre précis de Galates, comment concilier l'affirmation selon laquelle «à partir de la foi, Dieu justifie les païens» (3,8) et la déclaration qui veut qu'au jour de la fin «chacun portera sa propre charge» (6,5)? Pour tenter d'y répondre, l'on se penchera sur la séquence parénétique de Galates.

#### IV. LA PARÉNÈSE DE GALATES: POINT D'ORGUE DE LA LETTRE?

À la lecture de Galates, les exégètes de Paul ont régulièrement été mis en difficulté au moment de délimiter la section éthique de lettre et d'en élucider les enjeux dans l'argumentation. C'est singulièrement le

<sup>36</sup> Ainsi, aussi: M.C. DE BOER, *Galatians*. A Commentary (Louisville, KY 2011) 143; J. BECKER, *Paul*, 339.

<sup>37</sup> Ici et dans la suite BETZ, *Galatians*, 116-117; BECKER, *Paul*, 328-331; K. KERTELGE, „Rechtfertigung“ bei Paulus. Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechtfertigungsbegriff (Münster <sup>2</sup>1971) 15-48; IDEM, «δικαιοσύνη», *EDNT* 1 (1990) 325-330; IDEM, «δικαιόω», *EDNT* 1 (1990) 330-334.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. VOUGA, *An die Galater*, 19-20, 100-101, 156-157.



commencement de la séquence que l'on peine à identifier. Pas moins de six propositions ont été faites dans l'histoire de l'exégèse moderne <sup>39</sup>: 4,12; 4,21; 5,1; 5,2; 5,7; 5,13. Contrastées, ces multiples tentatives de découpage autorisent un premier constat: en Galates, tracer une ligne de partage étanche entre argumentation théologique et recommandations pratiques, entre indicatif du salut et impératif éthique, tient de la gageure. Mieux: loin d'être simplement reléguée en toute fin de missive, la pensée éthique de l'apôtre infiltre déjà son argumentation en amont et en colore le propos d'ensemble <sup>40</sup>.

Cela dit, si toute dissociation stricte entre théologie et éthique semble ainsi mise en échec, c'est néanmoins une nouvelle période argumentative que l'apôtre inaugure au seuil du chapitre 5 de sa lettre. Le simple fait que l'enjeu immédiat du conflit, à savoir le rite de la circoncision, apparaisse à ce stade de la missive seulement <sup>41</sup> — et cela, dans une formule solennelle dont Paul est coutumier en d'autres lieux charnières (par ex., 2 Co 10,1) <sup>42</sup> — en témoigne avec éclat: «Voici, moi Paul, je vous dis que si vous vous faites circoncire [...]» (5,2). Jusque-là, l'épistolier n'avait fait qu'effleurer l'objet du litige, soit à l'aide de formulations forfaitaires (1,7; 3,3), soit en creux de son propos (par ex., 2,3; cf. aussi 2,7-9).

C'est dire que la séquence qui démarre ici n'est pas à dégrader au rang d'appendice ou d'annexe secondaires à Galates <sup>43</sup>. Bien plutôt: les chapitres 1-4 de la lettre sont à considérer comme des développements autorisant l'évaluation, à partir du chapitre 5, des retombées concrètes, pratiques, du discours paulinien. C'est dire aussi que l'enjeu ultime de l'épître aux Galates n'est pas de nature apologétique ou judiciaire, comme initialement proposé par Hans Dieter Betz <sup>44</sup>, mais plutôt délibérative, axée qu'elle est sur l'utilité ou l'inutilité d'une action, en l'occurrence la pratique de la circoncision et l'observance de certaines prescriptions mosaïques <sup>45</sup>. En témoigne, là encore, le texte de 5,1-12. A commencer par le vocabulaire

<sup>39</sup> O. MERK, «Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief», ZNW 60 (1969) 83-104.

<sup>40</sup> Voir l'inventaire des passages de Galates à relevance éthique chez D.F. TOLMIE, «Liberty – love – the Spirit: Ethics and ethos according to the Letter to the Galatians», *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (éd. J.G. VAN DER WATT) (BZNW 141; Berlin – New York 2006) 243-245.

<sup>41</sup> Ici et pour la suite: F.J. MATERA, «The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians: Gal. 5.1 – 6.17», JSNT 32 (1988) 79-91.

<sup>42</sup> Avec S. LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Galates* (Lectio Divina. Commentaires 9; Paris 2000) 375; WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, 365.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. MATERA, «The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians», 88.

<sup>44</sup> BETZ, *Galatians*, 24.

<sup>45</sup> G.A. KENNEDY, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Studies in Religion; Chapel Hill, NC 1984) 144-147; WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, *passim*.



exploité au verset 2 pour dénoncer l'erreur des Galates: «[...] si vous vous faites circoncire, Christ ne vous servira (ὠφελήσει) en rien». C'est au langage de l'éloquence suasoire que Paul emprunte le verbe ὠφελήσει (ὠφελέω: «être utile à», «servir à») <sup>46</sup>, dénonçant le caractère nuisible de la circoncision. La nature délibérative du propos se reconnaît également à l'empreinte du *pathos* dans ces versets: que ce soit l'espérance (*spes*; cf. 5,5) ou la peur (*metus*; cf. 5,2.4.10), ce sont là des émotions couramment exploitées dans le *genus deliberativum* <sup>47</sup>. Bref, l'objectif du discours paulinien semble ici atteint.

L'inclusion disposée entre 5,1-12 et l'introduction de Galates est susceptible de conforter cette opinion <sup>48</sup>. En effet, le proème de la lettre (1,6-12) installe un faisceau de traits et motifs que l'on retrouve en tête du chapitre 5. Notamment: la critique des missionnaires actifs en Galatie (1,6-7|5,7.10b.12); la mise en scène de l'apôtre et de son *ethos* personnel (1,10|5,5.11); l'explicitation — à l'usage d'une construction en «ni..., ni..., mais...» — de la règle théologique à laquelle cet *ethos* est ordonné (1,11-12|5,6); la sanction à laquelle s'expose celui ou celle qui viendrait à propager un «autre Évangile» (1,8-9|5,10b). Le tout soutenu par la reprise, de part et d'autre, de formules similaires, à commencer par les expressions ἀπὸ τοῦ καλέσαντος ὑμᾶς (1,6) et ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς (5,8) servant à désigner Dieu.

Correctes, ces différentes observations ont conduit certains exégètes à élever l'unité en question au rang de climax de l'argumentation théologique de Paul en Galates <sup>49</sup> et à la détacher des développements subséquents. De notre avis, ce n'est pas prendre au sérieux les liens que 5,1-12 tisse avec l'aval de la missive, également <sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> À ce propos, J.-N. ALETTI, «La rhétorique paulinienne: construction et communication d'une pensée», *Paul, une théologie en construction* (éds. A. DETTWILER – J.-D. KAESTLI – D. MARGUERAT) (MoBi 51; Genève 2004) 54, note 54, déclare: «Le verbe ὠφελέω désigne ce que le genre délibératif vise, à savoir l'*utile*» (l'auteur souligne). Aussi WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, 364.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. H. LAUSBERG, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik. Eine Grundlegung der literarischen Rhetorik* (Stuttgart <sup>3</sup>1990) §§ 229, 437. Cité d'après WOLTER, *Paulus*, 222-223, 313.

<sup>48</sup> Inclusion exhumée et détaillée par R.N. LONGENECKER, *Galatians* (Dallas, TX 1990) 221-222.

<sup>49</sup> J.D.G. DUNN, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (London 1993) 260-261; LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Galates*, 374; WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, 359-360.

<sup>50</sup> Avec MATERA, «The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians», 83, dont nous prolongeons, dans ce qui suit, la mise au jour du jeu d'échos orchestré entre 5,1-12 et 6,11-17.

## V. 5,1-12: PIVOT DE L'ÉCRIT AUX GALATES

En effet: plusieurs éléments de la conclusion de Galates (6,12-17) appellent à la mémoire du lecteur le propos paulinien émis en tête du chapitre 5. A commencer par la salve de critiques (6,12-13) décochée à l'encontre des «circoncis» (οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι) actifs en Galatie, l'apôtre stigmatisant leur défaut d'observance légale (οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουσιν). Pour un lecteur un tant soit peu attentif, pareille exigence de cohérence entre la circoncision et la pratique de la Torah était déjà pointée du doigt par Paul en 5,2-3 (μαρτύρομαι δὲ πάλιν παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ ὅτι ὀφειλέτης ἐστὶν ὅλον τὸν νόμον ποιῆσαι).

A cela s'ajoute un second jeu de renvois intratextuels: il affecte l'*ethos* de Paul (6,14-15). Un *ethos* opposé (cf. ἐμοὶ δέ) au modèle personnifié par les partisans de la circoncision et fondé sur la croix du Christ Jésus (v. 14a: ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), assise exclusive de la «nouvelle création» depuis le Golgotha (v. 15: οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις). Là encore, le jeu d'écho avec l'amont est évident — sur un plan lexical comme sémantique. Précisément, le «je» de l'apôtre surgit aussi en 5,11 (cf. ἐγὼ δέ), verset contrastant, à la lumière de son exemple personnel, la prédication de la circoncision et le «scandale de la croix». Mieux: la règle théologique au fondement du «moi» paulinien est, de part et d'autre, exprimée dans un phrasé similaire (5,6; 6,15). Le tableau suivant permet de visualiser le jeu de correspondances:

<i>Galates 5,6</i>	<i>Galates 6,15</i>
ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη	οὔτε γὰρ περιτομή τί ἐστὶν οὔτε ἀκροβυστία ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις.

Enfin, c'est l'horizon eschatologique de ces *ethos* en concurrence que Paul expose dans ces deux passages: en 6,16, la règle sur laquelle les Galates sont appelés à s'aligner (ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν) est la condition pour hériter de la paix et de la miséricorde dernières; en 5,2.5, c'est l'espérance de la justice (ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης)<sup>51</sup> dont le croyant attend par la foi (ἐκ πίστεως) la confirmation pour le jour de la

<sup>51</sup> De notre avis, le génitif δικαιοσύνης équivaut ici à un *genitivus objectivus*.

fin <sup>52</sup>, la circoncision menaçant pour sa part d'annuler l'utilité du Christ face au Dieu Juge (Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσῃ <sup>53</sup>).

Bref, relié à l'exorde de la lettre, le texte de 5,1-12 est également rattaché à son aval, singulièrement à la clôture de Galates, échafaudant autour de la séquence parénétiq̃ue une boucle discursive <sup>54</sup>. Reste à en mesurer les effets de sens. A cet endroit, un constat s'impose d'emblée: loin d'introduire une annexe secondaire à l'écrit, 5,1-12 en constitue au contraire le centre de gravité ou, mieux dit, la plaque tournante. S'y retrouve la disjonction radicale entre Paul et les prédicateurs judéo-chrétiens de Galatie qui campe les deux extrémités de sa missive. Une problématisation du contexte de communication que l'apôtre conduit à la lumière des acquis théologiques patiemment argumentés jusqu'ici dans la lettre. En témoigne, par exemple, la reproduction dans ces quelques versets de plusieurs théologoumènes centraux aux chapitres en amont (cf. surtout 2,15-21) — tels le vocabulaire de la justification (5,4.5) ou la dualité structurante ἐν νόμῳ vs. ἐκ πίστεως / πνεύματι (5,4-5) <sup>55</sup>. Vrai sur le plan thématique, le phénomène de reprise se vérifie aussi dans le registre lexical. Un exemple suffira ici <sup>56</sup>:

2,21b: Οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἅρα Χριστὸς ὥρεᾶν ἀπέθανεν.

5,2: ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε, Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσῃ

5,4: οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε

Cela dit, tout en prolongeant le propos théologique développé en amont, 5,1-12 inaugure en même temps, à l'évocation de l'exigence concrète de la circoncision nous l'avons dit <sup>57</sup>, un nouveau développement discursif centré sur les pratiques de ceux qui sont ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (5,13 – 6,10). Plusieurs motifs en témoignent. Trois en particulier:

<sup>52</sup> Le verbe ἀπεκδέχομαι ici employé sert, chez Paul, à décrire une vive attente des choses de la fin (cf. Rm 8,19.23.25; 1 Co 1,7; Ph 3,20). Cf. WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, 369-370.

<sup>53</sup> Reconnaissance au futur une valeur eschatologique: H.D. BETZ, *Galatians*, 259, note 55; F. MUSSNER, *Der Galaterbrief* (Freiburg – Basel 1974) 346; WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, 367.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. MATERA, «The Culmination of Paul's Argument to the Galatians», 83. Ce faisant, Matera (88), loin de dégrader la séquence éthique de Galates au rang de simple appendice, y reconnaît à l'inverse la culmination de l'argumentation théologique conduite par Paul.

<sup>55</sup> Ici et dans la suite MUSSNER, *Der Galaterbrief*, 350; VOUGA, *An die Galater*, 120-126.

<sup>56</sup> Notent cette mise en réseau: LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Galates*, 376; MUSSNER, *Der Galaterbrief*, 346; VOUGA, *An die Galater*, 122-123.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. περιτέμνω en 5,2-3; περιτομή en 5,6.11; ἀποκόπτω en 5,12.

- 1) Au v. 1 du chapitre 5, Paul use pour la première fois dans sa lettre d'une construction où l'impératif (éthique) succède à l'indicatif (du salut): Τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἡμᾶς Χριστὸς ἠλευθέρωσεν· στήκετε οὖν καὶ μὴ πάλιν ζυγῷ δουλείας ἐνέχεσθε. Une construction qui se répètera ensuite à deux reprises, en 5,13 et en 5,25 <sup>58</sup>.
- 2) De même, Paul introduit au seuil du chapitre 5, également pour la toute première fois dans sa lettre, le substantif ἀγάπη (v. 6: δι' ἀγάπης; en 2,20b, Paul utilisait le verbe ἀγαπάω, et cela pour décrire l'œuvre christologique), critère par excellence de l'éthique de la foi dans la parénèse paulinienne (cf. 5,13.22).
- 3) Enfin, l'échéance du Jugement notifiée à plusieurs reprises en 5,13 – 6,10 <sup>59</sup> et, surtout, élevée en position climactique en toute fin de séquence (cf. 6,9: καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ) est, elle aussi, préalablement invoquée en 5,1-12, aux versets 2b (Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὀφελήσει) et 10b (ὁ δὲ τὰράσσω ὑμᾶς βαστάσει τὸ κρίμα) très exactement (voir aussi 5,5).

Concluons brièvement ce point: loin de favoriser une partition étanche entre les développements théologiques et parénétiques de Galates, le texte de 5,1-12 en constitue au contraire la solution de continuité. Paul y articule, dans un même élan, enseignement sur la justification et recommandations pratiques, et tout cela sous le signe de la fin. Un montage qui mérite d'être soigneusement examiné avant de conclure.

## VI. LA PARÉNÈSE DU JUGEMENT:

### LIEU DE DÉPLOIEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE DE L'ÊTRE NOUVEAU

#### 1. La «foi agissant par l'amour» ou l'«énergisme» de Paul

Partons du «canon» théologique de Galates, tel que Paul l'expose en toutes lettres en clôture de son écrit: «Ni la circoncision n'est quelque chose, ni l'incirconcision, mais la nouvelle création. Et tous ceux qui s'aligneront (στοιχήσουσιν) sur cette règle-là (τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ), paix sur eux et miséricorde, aussi sur l'Israël de Dieu» (6,15-16). On le voit, au moment de quitter son auditoire, Paul enjoint les Galates, s'ils souhaitent hériter du salut dernier, de conformer leur vie entière à la création nouvelle, le verbe στοιχέω ici employé ne désignant pas simplement un acquiescement

<sup>58</sup> Avec BETZ, *Galatians*, 254-256, 271-274, 293.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. κληρονομήσουσιν en 5,21; βαστάσει en 6,5; θερίσει en 6,7.8[2x]; θερίσομεν en 6,9. Ici et pour la suite, lire VOUGA, *An die Galater*, 125 et 142-152.

intellectuel ou noétique mais bien — à l'instar de 5,25b — un assentiment existentiel et éthique <sup>60</sup>. Sont donc conjoints, sous l'horizon de la fin et selon une succession non commutable, l'action renouvelante du Créateur et l'engagement moral de la créature.

Une intrication du théologique et de l'anthropologique que l'apôtre énonçait déjà au seuil du chapitre 5, en son verset 6 précisément. En effet, dans une formule parallèle à la règle consignée en 6,15, Paul écrivait ceci: «En Christ Jésus, ni la circoncision ne vaut quelque chose, ni l'incirconcision, mais la foi agissant par l'amour (πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη)». L'équation ainsi établie est éclairante: selon l'apôtre, la *καινή κτίσις* (6,15) n'est pas caractérisée par la seule foi (indépendamment des œuvres) mais correspond à l'événement englobant qu'est «la foi agissant par l'amour» (5,6) <sup>61</sup>. Une expression fameuse qui bute sur de notoires difficultés philologiques.

Premièrement, comment traduire le verbe ἐνεργεῖσθαι? Son sens est-il passif et transitif (la foi activée/rendue agissante par l'amour) ou moyen et intransitif (la foi qui agit/agissante par l'amour). En accord avec son usage fréquent dans le Nouveau Testament, la deuxième option — soit la voix moyenne — semble devoir être privilégiée <sup>62</sup>. Ensuite, de quel amour s'agit-il? Celui de Dieu ou celui de l'homme? Ainsi posée, l'alternative est probablement trop radicale. Car si l'amour est associé en Ga 2,20c à l'action du Christ en faveur de l'humain (τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με), nul hasard qu'elle devienne dans la suite de la lettre la marque distinctive de l'éthique chrétienne (5,13.22), dans la mesure où c'est le même Christ qui dorénavant détermine la vie et l'agir du baptisé (cf. 2,20a: «Je vis, mais ce n'est plus moi [qui vit], mais vit en moi Christ»). Pour cette raison aussi, Paul n'hésitera pas à reprendre en 5,13c, désormais dans une exhortation à l'adresse des Galates (ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις), l'expression exploitée en 5,6 (δι' ἀγάπης). Bref, l'ἀγάπη possède dans ce dernier verset une dimension vraisemblablement double: anthropologique et, indirectement, christologique. En paraphrasant, l'on pourrait dire ceci: l'amour du Messie Jésus, source et norme de la vie nouvelle du baptisé, se traduit dans l'existence humaine par une dynamique de foi «qui porte celui qu'elle anime à agir en faisant œuvre d'amour» <sup>63</sup>. En conséquence de quoi, l'amour n'est pas ici une

<sup>60</sup> Cf. MARTYN, *Galatians*, 566.

<sup>61</sup> H. SCHLIER, *Der Brief an die Galater* (KEK 7/14; Göttingen 1971) 283.

<sup>62</sup> Rm 7,5; 2 Co 1,6; 4,12; Ep 3,20; Col 1,29; 1 Th 2,13; 2 Th 2,7. Avec LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Galates*, 384; MUSSNER, *Der Galaterbrief*, 353; VOUGA, *An die Galater*, 124.

<sup>63</sup> LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Galates*, 384. Aussi: KONRADT, "Die Christonomie", 71.

réponse seconde à la grâce — l'impératif par démarcation de l'indicatif — ou une condition imposée à la justification, mais la qualité même de la foi, de cette foi qui suscite l'espérance de la justice (cf. 5,5: ἐκ πίστεως ἐλπίδα δικαιοσύνης ἀπεκδεχόμεθα) <sup>64</sup>. Pour sûr, reliée au ver-set précédent par la particule γάρ et par la reprise du mot-crochet πίστις, Ga 5,6 œuvre à clarifier la nature de la foi qui justifie: elle «énergise» (ἐνεργουμένη) l'agir éthique et reçoit de l'amour son authentique visage (δι' ἀγάπης).

Ainsi aussi, l'on comprend pourquoi Paul peut parler de la justice aussi bien en termes passés/présents (2,16a.21b; 3,6.8.11a; 5,4) que futurs (2,16d <sup>65</sup>; 5,5). Non pas qu'il y ait deux justifications différentes dans son système de pensée, l'une octroyée gracieusement au baptême, l'autre soumise au verdict forensique des œuvres (ou de la «foi agissant par l'amour») <sup>66</sup>, mais parce que le baptême inaugure un processus historico-salutaire <sup>67</sup>. Un processus de renouvellement situé entre Pâques et parousie où le don et l'action, la liberté et l'amour, le spirituel et le corporel ne sont pas disjoints. Ou pour le dire avec John Barclay, l'indicatif du salut, chez Paul, n'est pas seulement «ce que Dieu *a fait* (élection, etc.) mais ce qu'il *continue de faire* dans et pour le croyant» <sup>68</sup>, soutenant sans relâche son être comme son agir. Advient dès lors une créature nouvelle, animée par l'Esprit de la fin des temps et désormais capable d'agir pour le bien en réponse au commandement d'amour <sup>69</sup>. Pour cette raison également, la réalité nouvelle inaugurée au Golgotha et manifestée par l'Esprit dans la condition croyante ne se traduit pas seulement dans l'existence via la liberté. L'ἀγάπη et, plus largement, l'entraide réciproque (cf. la reprise du pronom ἀλλήλων en 5,13.15[2×].17.26[2×]; 6,2) en sont également des lieux de surgissement dans le temps avant-dernier, donnant corps et forme à la liberté évangélique<sup>70</sup>. Une intrication du théologique et de

<sup>64</sup> Nous suivons ici et dans ce qui suit T. SÖDING, «Glaube, der durch Liebe wirkt. Rechtfertigung und Ethik im Galaterbrief», *Umstrittener Galaterbrief*. Studien zur Situierung und Theologie des Paulus-Schreibens (éds. M. BACHMANN – B. KOLLMANN) (BTS 106; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2010) 189.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. WITHERINGTON, *Grace in Galatia*, 183-184.

<sup>66</sup> Ainsi: J. JEREMIAS, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen <sup>6</sup>1962) 207, note 4.

<sup>67</sup> Ici et dans la suite C.K. BARRETT, *Freedom and Obligations*. A Study of the Epistle to the Galatians (London 1985) 65; K. KERTELGE, „Rechtfertigung“ bei Paulus, 159.

<sup>68</sup> BARCLAY, *Obedying the Truth*, 227 (notre traduction; l'auteur souligne). Ici et pour ce qui suit: aussi J.L. MARTYN, «Epilogue: An Essay in Pauline Meta-Ethics», *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (éds. J.M.G. BARCLAY – S.J. GATHER-COLE) (LNTS 335; London 2006) 182.

<sup>69</sup> Bien vu par MARTYN, «Epilogue: An Essay in Pauline Meta-Ethics», 180-181.

<sup>70</sup> Avec KONRADT, «Die Christonomie der Freiheit», 72.

l'anthropologique que ne circonscrit correctement ni le terme de monergisme, ni celui de synergisme, mais bien plutôt celui d'énergisme <sup>71</sup> (cf. ἐνεργέω en 2,8[2×]; 3,5; 5,6).

## 2. L'éthique, pierre de touche de la «foi qui justifie»

Cela dit, situés à la «jonction des temps» <sup>72</sup> et vivant eux-mêmes leur foi dans un corps fragile et périssable (cf. 2,20b: ἐν σαρκί), les croyants sont toujours à nouveau menacés par les assauts de la σάρξ (5,13) et par des rechutes loin de la grâce (5,4; cf. 1,8-9) <sup>73</sup>. D'où l'importance de la parénèse du jugement <sup>74</sup>, Paul appelant les baptisés à «exercer leur être nouveau» <sup>75</sup> sous l'action du πνεῦμα et à en manifester toute l'ampleur, agir inclus. Car conformément à l'anthropologie biblique dont on sait la nature holiste — la pensée hébraïque ne concevant pas l'identité humaine indépendamment d'un corps <sup>76</sup> —, l'individu n'est pas seulement identifié par ses projets mais aussi par ses actions (cf. Mt 7,16-20) <sup>77</sup>; en un mot: face au Dieu Juge, l'être humain n'est pas dissociable de ses faits et gestes. Partant, il n'y a pas de créature nouvelle sans agir renouvelé! Pour cette raison aussi, l'éthique et l'ecclésiologie ne sont pas dégradées par la justification paulinienne au rang de cratères secondaires, mais, à l'inverse, élevées en lieux par excellence où se manifeste l'espérance de la justification et se concrétise la transformation en cours du baptisé. Ou, alors, ses rechutes dans la chair.

<sup>71</sup> Non sans hésitations, pareille proposition a aussi été faite par J. Barclay dans «'By the Grace of God I Am What I Am': Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul», *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment* (éds. J.M.G. BARCLAY – S.J. GATHER-COLE) (LNTS 335; London 2006) 156, note 39.

<sup>72</sup> MARTYN, *Galatians*, 110 (notre traduction).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J.M.G. BARCLAY, «Believers and the 'Last Judgment' in Paul: Rethinking Grace and Recompense», *Eschatologie – Eschatology. The Sixth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium. Eschatology in Old Testament, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Tübingen, September, 2009) (éds. H.-J. ECKSTEIN *et al.*) (WUNT 1.272; Tübingen 2011) 204; KONRADT, «Die Christonomie der Freiheit», 72.

<sup>74</sup> Ici et dans la suite W. SCHRAGE, «Probleme paulinischer Ethik anhand von Gal 5,25 – 6,10», W. SCHRAGE, *Kreuzestheologie und Ethik im Neuen Testament* (FRLANT 205; Göttingen 2004) 251-254.

<sup>75</sup> D'après et avec W. HARNISCH, «Einübung des neuen Seins. Paulinische Paränese am Beispiel des Galaterbriefes», *ZThK* 84 (1987) 279-296.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. U. SCHNELLE, *Neutestamentliche Anthropologie. Jesus – Paulus – Johannes* (BTS 18; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1991) 68.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. D. MARGUERAT, *Le Jugement dans l'évangile de Matthieu* (MoBi 6; Genève 1995) 190-191, qui reconnaît semblablement, dans la perspective du jugement, l'importance de l'éthique comme «pierre de touche de la foi» chez Matthieu.



### 3. Une application pratique de la justification par la foi <sup>78</sup>

Ce faisant, Paul offre également une réplique appropriée à la crise galate, crise dont le détonateur est, nous l'avons vu, de nature sociologique. En clair, c'est l'incidence sociale de l'identité nouvelle des pagano-chrétiens qui se trouvait au cœur du litige <sup>79</sup>: leur statut au sein de l'alliance d'Israël devait-il être normalisé ou complété par adoption de la circoncision et, plus largement, des observances mosaïques? Sinon, quel *modus vivendi* leur préférer? Si les prédicateurs de la circoncision étaient d'avis que l'Esprit de la fin des temps dont avaient été oints les helléno-chrétiens devait se manifester dans le registre pratique par un agir conforme à la Torah, les agrégeant ainsi à la descendance d'Abraham en qualité de prosélytes, pour Paul au contraire, la foi qui justifie en Christ et accueille quiconque indépendamment de son statut (3,27-28) était appelée à se traduire socialement par un *ethos* inclusif et qualifié par l'ἀγάπη seulement. Bref, l'agir communautaire est bel et bien le lieu où se partagent les fronts. Dans sa pratique sociale, l'individu manifeste, selon Paul, le fondement de son être: la seigneurie du monde ou celle de Dieu.

Pour cette raison aussi, la parénèse du jugement peut prendre, en Galates, un tour autant négatif-critique que positif-exhortatif <sup>80</sup>. Un exemple négatif, tout d'abord. Lorsque Pierre à Antioche rompit la commensalité avec les pagano-chrétiens au nom des tabous alimentaires prescrits par la *kashrout* (2,11-14), ce sont précisément les implications concrètes, singulièrement socio-ecclésiales, de la «foi qui justifie» qu'il a négligées <sup>81</sup>. Car non seulement il a rétabli socialement un principe qualifiant, celui des codes rituels de la Torah, mais surtout il a porté atteinte à l'unité ecclésiale fondée en Christ (cf. 3,28d: πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), en faisant table à part. En clair: qui s'engage dans des comportements — hostilités, discorde, jalousie, emportements, rivalités, dissensions, factions, envies, etc. (cf. 5,20-21) — qui corrompent la relation à l'autre, au frère et à la sœur singulièrement, trahit sa (re-)chute loin de la grâce et s'expose au déshérissement eschatologique (5,21: οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν). Paul en avertit sans ménagement les Galates (5,21: ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν) <sup>82</sup>, brandissant devant eux l'épouvantail de la sanction ultime.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. HOPPE, «Paränese und Theologie im Galaterbrief», 229; et M. WOLTER, «Eine neue paulinische Perspektive», ZNT 14 (2004) 6-7.

<sup>79</sup> Ainsi et pour la suite: BARCLAY, *Obeying the Truth*, 70-74 et *passim*.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. M. KONRADT, *Gericht und Gemeinde*. Eine Studie zur Bedeutung und Funktion von Gerichtsaussagen im Rahmen der paulinischen Ekklesiologie und Ethik im 1 Thess und 1 Kor (BZNW 117; Berlin – New York 2003) 494-495, 523.

<sup>81</sup> A ce sujet et pour ce qui suit: BARCLAY, *Paul and the Gift*, 365-370 et *passim*.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Galates*, 428, note 4.



Cela dit, la parénèse du jugement s'exprime aussi positivement, à l'instar des recommandations à agir pour le bien que Paul consigne au sortir de sa missive, en 6,8b-10 précisément <sup>83</sup>. L'ultime exhortation qu'il adresse aux Galates le manifeste sans détour (6,10): «Aussi longtemps que nous en avons le temps (καιρὸν ἔχομεν), faisons le bien envers tous, et surtout envers les membres de la maisonnée de la foi!» En clair: situé sous l'horizon du καιρὸς ἰδίου (6,9b), le croyant est non seulement appelé à ne pas se lasser de faire le bien, mais surtout à manifester par son agir son statut d'οἰκεῖος τῆς πίστεως <sup>84</sup>, en un mot, son appartenance à l'identité sociale fondée dans la «foi qui justifie».

Bref, si l'éthique paulinienne est — en conformité avec son fondement théologique qu'est la justification sans condition — culturellement inclusive et dénote une forte plasticité <sup>85</sup>, puisant tour à tour dans le patrimoine d'Israël (cf. 5,14 où Paul cite Lv 19,18) et dans la morale hellénistique du monde antique (cf. 5,19-23) <sup>86</sup>, elle n'en est pas pour autant inexistante ou indifférente. La parénèse du jugement est là pour le signifier, rappelant au croyant que si la justice lui a été octroyée gracieusement à son baptême, il est toujours menacé par les assauts du mal et appelé à déployer les incidences pratiques de l'être nouveau.

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Au sortir de ce parcours d'exégèse, nous formulerons cinq remarques en guise de récapitulation:

- 1) L'enseignement sur la justification et la parénèse du jugement participent, en Galates, d'une seule et même argumentation. Une argumentation de nature délibérative, soucieuse de préciser l'*ethos* — compris comme le lieu où s'objective l'être <sup>87</sup> — avec lequel les païens peuvent espérer se présenter devant le Dieu Juge au jour de la fin.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. KONRADT, *Gericht und Gemeinde*, 494-495.

<sup>84</sup> Sur le sens de cette expression, WOLTER, *Paulus*, 84.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. WOLTER, *Paulus*, 322: «Dass Paulus paränetische Weisungen formuliert, die für christliche Juden wie Nichtjuden gleichermassen plausibel sind, ist die unmittelbare ethische Entsprechung zur Zentralthese seiner Rechtfertigungslehre: dass Gott Juden wie Nichtjuden gleichermassen auf Grund ihres Christus-Glaubens gerecht spricht».

<sup>86</sup> Cf. A. VÖGTLE, *Die Tugend und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament*. Exegetisch, religions- und formgeschichtlich untersucht (Münster 1936); S. WIBBING, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament und ihre Traditionsgeschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Qumran-Texte* (BZNW 25; Berlin 1959).

<sup>87</sup> A ce sujet: M. WOLTER, «Identität und Ethos bei Paulus», *Theologie und Ethos im frühen Christentum*. Studien zu Jesus, Paulus und Lukas (WUNT 236; Tübingen 2009) 128.

- 2) Pour Paul, cet *ethos* — qu'il personnifie lui-même (1,10; 6,14.17b) et dont il peut recommander l'imitation (4,12) — doit s'accorder à une règle unique, à savoir la «nouvelle création» ou la «foi agissant par l'amour». C'est dire que le croyant est appelé à une concrétion éthique de l'être nouveau: un être façonné et maintenu par la force créatrice de Dieu et dont l'identité se manifeste autant dans la foi au Christ que dans l'amour du prochain, la foi «énergisant» l'action et l'amour donnant son visage à la foi.
- 3) Pour cette raison aussi, les pagano-chrétiens ne sont pas déterminés seulement par leur liberté en Christ mais aussi par leur engagement pour le bien (5,1.13), en Église notamment (6,10), l'amour pour tous et le service mutuel objectivant socialement le message d'une identité indépendante de tout statut ou *ethos* et potentiellement universelle<sup>88</sup>.
- 4) Évoluant entre Pâques et la parousie, l'être nouveau du baptisé est caractérisé autant par le «déjà là» de la justification par la foi que par le «pas encore» de sa confirmation dernière (cf. «l'espérance de la justice» en 5,5). Dit autrement: si le baptême est le lieu d'un salut acquis par grâce, il est néanmoins possible de chuter hors de cette même grâce (5,4c: τῆς χάριτος ἐξέπεσате). Car inscrit dans les limites d'un corps fragile et périssable, le baptisé est toujours sujet aux séductions de la chair, ses assauts sur le «moi» se traduisant — ostensiblement, là encore — par un dérèglement éthique et social (cf. 5,19-21). Ou alors, par un attachement excessif aux «œuvres de la Loi» (cf. 6,12-13), posture personnifiée, selon Paul, par les «circoncis» actifs en Galatie.
- 5) C'est pourquoi, en Galates, la parénèse (du jugement) n'est pas indifférente, mais concourt à manifester et soutenir l'être nouveau — dans sa liberté comme dans son action aimante. Car renouvelé par la grâce, le croyant ne l'est pas qu'en paroles, mais aussi en actes, construisant son identité sociale (cf. Tajfel et Turner) indépendamment des statuts mondains et dans la reconnaissance de l'autre comme un frère ou une sœur.

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<sup>88</sup> WOLTER, «Identität und Ethos bei Paulus», 121-169.

## SUMMARY

The articulation between theology and ethics in the Pauline Letters is an old and much disputed research field. The present article aims to reopen this exegetical file, by analyzing the particular case of the Letter to the Galatians. Firstly, how precisely shall we delineate the exhortation section of the letter? Secondly, what status and function does it hold in the Pauline argument and in the frame of the Galatians' crisis? Finally, how can we bind together the message of justification by faith, centrally argued in Galatians 1–4, and the repeated calls for an ethical commitment that God will reward or punish at the last Judgment, which we read in Galatians 5–6 ?

# RES BIBLIOGRAPHICA

## IN ATTESA DI UN PARADIGMA CONDIVISO: COMMENTARI A *ESODO*

Da quando — a partire dagli Anni Settanta del secolo scorso — l'ipotesi documentaria ha cessato di rappresentare il paradigma condiviso circa l'origine del Pentateuco, continua il dibattito circa i termini più adeguati per render ragione della formazione dei primi cinque libri del canone biblico.

All'interno di tale dibattito, va crescendo, nella sensibilità degli studiosi, l'avvertenza di non elaborare ipotesi diacroniche sull'intera sezione privilegiando, di fatto, uno solo dei libri in questione (di fatto, nel caso dell'ipotesi documentaria, *Genesi*). Il che spiega, negli ultimi decenni, la crescente attenzione per le stratificazioni diacroniche rilevabili anche in libri precedentemente meno considerati (in special modo, *Numeri*) o, comunque, differenti dal libro d'esordio.

Nel frattempo, negli ultimi decenni si è stemperata la contrapposizione tra i fautori di un approccio esclusivamente sincronico ai testi biblici e i sostenitori di una necessaria considerazione della loro dimensione diacronica, spesso a favore della opportuna complementarietà degli approcci.

In questo quadro complessivo, consideriamo tre commentari pubblicati in questi ultimi tre anni e dedicati a *Esodo*, libro quanto mai significativo per la fede biblica. Ci soffermiamo sulla presentazione dei primi due, mettendo a confronto le loro opzioni diacroniche, per poi passare alla presentazione del terzo e, infine, concludere con il raffronto su una questione specifica.

### I. IL COMMENTARIO DI R. ALBERTZ <sup>1</sup>

Autore del primo commentario in esame è Rainer Albertz, professore emerito di Antico Testamento presso la Facoltà di Teologia Evangelica dell'Università di Münster, celebre per i suoi studi sulla storia, la letteratura, la religione e la teologia dell'Israele biblico. Quanto a sensibilità

<sup>1</sup> R. ALBERTZ, *Exodus, Band I: Ex 1–18* (ZBK.AT 2.1; Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 2012).

esegetica, Albertz è annoverato tra gli esponenti della cosiddetta “scuola di Heidelberg” (insieme a R. Rendtorff, F. Crüsemann, E. Blum, ...).

L'opera si presenta come un commentario di alto profilo, di taglio eminentemente storico-critico, attento però ad articolare in modo adeguato considerazioni di ordine sincronico e di ordine diacronico. La bibliografia, circoscritta ma puntuale e significativa, testimonia il confronto con le principali opere pertinenti e con le voci rilevanti del dibattito in corso.

### 1. *L'articolazione dell'opera*

Il volume si suddivide tra una significativa introduzione (pagine 11-37), il commento puntuale di Esodo 1 – 18 (39-314; per il commento alla seconda del libro biblico si attende un successivo volume [pubblicato nel 2015 <sup>2</sup>]) e alcune utili appendici (315-319: lo schema dell'ipotizzato modello di composizione del Pentateuco, la bibliografia e la tavola delle abbreviazioni).

Nell'introduzione, Albertz si sofferma, dapprima, ad inquadrare il libro dell'*Esodo* nella cornice del Pentateuco e dell'Esateuco, a considerarne la struttura e a motivare l'opportunità di un'adeguata articolazione della lettura sincronica e della lettura diacronica del libro, senza improprie contrapposizioni; per passare, poi, ad ipotizzare il processo di formazione del libro, ad esplorare la consistenza storica degli avvenimenti in esso narrati e ad illustrare, infine, l'impianto del commentario stesso.

Nel commento di Esodo 1–18, l'Autore procede mediante la considerazione di unità circoscritte. Di ciascuna si fornisce la traduzione (segnalando nella forma grafica la stratificazione diacronica), si rileva la struttura sia interna che in rapporto al contesto (prevalgono in questi passaggi considerazioni di ordine sincronico), si argomenta la possibile attribuzione diacronica dei segmenti in esame, per passare poi al commento vero e proprio riccamente articolato tra attenzione al dato lessicale, allo sviluppo narrativo e alle connessioni letterarie e teologiche di più ampio respiro. All'interno del commento sono inseriti una quarantina di brevi e utili *excursus*, puntualmente segnalati nell'indice iniziale.

### 2. *L'ipotesi diacronica proposta*

Prendendo le distanze dall'ipotesi documentaria classica, Albertz ipotizza all'origine del Pentateuco una serie di unità letterarie indipendenti, successivamente rielaborate in forme narrative più ampie, accresciute poi

<sup>2</sup> R. ALBERTZ, *Exodus 19–40* (ZBK.AT 2.2; Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 2015).

mediante interventi redazionali. Pur riconoscendo l'esigenza di ulteriori approfondimenti, l'Autore ritiene che, perlomeno in Esodo 1–18, possano essere riconosciuti i seguenti strati letterari, risalenti ad epoche differenti: la “composizione dell'esodo” (K<sup>EX</sup>, *die Exoduskomposition*); la prima elaborazione sacerdotale (PB<sup>1</sup>, *die erste priesterliche Bearbeitung*); la seconda elaborazione sacerdotale (PB<sup>2</sup>, *die zweite priesterliche Bearbeitung*); la redazione post-deuteronomistica (D, *die spät-deuteronomistische Redaktion*); la terza elaborazione sacerdotale (PB<sup>3</sup>, *die dritte priesterliche Bearbeitung*); la “redazione dell'angelo” (MalR, *die Mal'ak-Redaktion*); la redazione dell'Esateuco (HexR, *die Hexateuchredaktion*); redazioni post-sacerdotali del Pentateuco (provvisoriamente PB<sup>4</sup> e PB<sup>5</sup>, *spätpriesterliche Pentateuchredaktionen*)<sup>3</sup>.

L'ipotesi diacronica prospettata da Albertz si colloca in linea con quanti vedono nel riferimento alle antiche ipotesi dei frammenti e ipotesi dei complementi il modello più adeguato per render ragione del processo di composizione del Pentateuco: in particolare, è riconoscibile la sua appartenenza alla “scuola di Heidelberg”. Ponendosi in modo originale in questa linea, l'Autore è attento a riconoscere le possibili antiche tradizioni sottese alla narrazione di Esodo 1–18, l'origine autonoma della tradizione dell'esodo, la sua articolazione con le storie delle origini e le storie patriarcali ad opera della tradizione sacerdotale, le numerose rielaborazioni redazionali avvenute in epoca post-esilica.

### 3. Possibili rilievi critici

Pur senza negare il valore dell'ipotesi abbozzata e riconoscendo che essa rappresenterà necessariamente un significativo termine di confronto per il dibattito futuro, si possono accennare, a titolo esemplificativo, un paio di questioni che sembrano richiedere ulteriori riscontri o approfondimenti.

a) La datazione della “composizione dell'esodo” (K<sup>EX</sup>) in tarda epoca esilica è motivata dalla sua configurazione quale “*Sündenfallgeschichte*” di Israele, in base alla sua delimitazione in Esodo 1–34\*<sup>4</sup>. Si tratta di verificare l'effettiva consistenza di tale composizione e di tale delimitazione e, in caso di valutazioni differenti, di riconsiderare l'effettiva consistenza delle tradizioni sull'esodo (frammenti, articolazione narrativa minima

<sup>3</sup> Per una presentazione sintetica delle diverse stratificazioni (materiali loro attribuiti, datazione, eventuale ruolo rispetto al resto del Pentateuco) rimandiamo a ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18*, 19–26, e al prospetto sintetico di ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18*, 315.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18*, 20.

variamente delimitabile?) prima della loro incardinazione nello scritto sacerdotale e la loro datazione. Detto diversamente: datazione tardo-esilica e inclusione dell'episodio del vitello d'oro nella composizione ipotizzata si poggiano anche su altri argomenti o rischiano di rappresentare una *petitio principii*?

b) Tra l'elaborazione unitaria delle tradizioni antiche operata dalla tradizione sacerdotale e la forma finale del Pentateuco, intervenne una consistente e significativa attività redazionale: pur nella diversità delle valutazioni specifiche, si tratta di una consapevolezza sostanzialmente comune. Restano, invece, oggetto di dibattito questioni quali l'estensione originaria dello scritto sacerdotale, i rapporti tra *Genesi* — *Esodo* e la composizione dei tre libri successivi, nonché la loro connessione con i libri dell'opera storica deuteronomistica. Su tale quadro di fondo della ricerca in corso, stante la modesta estensione di alcuni interventi redazionali ipotizzati da Albertz (in particolare, nel caso di PB<sup>2</sup>, PB<sup>3</sup>, MalR, PB<sup>4</sup> e PB<sup>5</sup>), ci si può chiedere se i presunti intendimenti ideologici e le caratteristiche letterarie riconoscibili nei materiali ipotizzati trovino effettivo riscontro in altri libri del Pentateuco e consentano il riconoscimento di specifiche attività redazionali di ampio respiro o non si debba, almeno in alcuni casi, ipotizzare interventi dall'orizzonte ideologico e letterario più circoscritto, non necessariamente implicati nelle possibili tappe di elaborazione di quello che risultò, infine, il Pentateuco.

## II. IL COMMENTARIO DI H. UTZSCHNEIDER E DI W. OSWALD <sup>5</sup>

Il secondo commentario in esame rappresenta il volume d'esordio di una nuova collana, l'*Internationaler Exegetischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament* (IEKAT), che si pone l'ambizioso obiettivo di coinvolgere nel commento dei libri veterotestamentari esegeti di differente appartenenza confessionale o religiosa e di differenti aree geografiche, auspicando tra l'altro il superamento della contrapposizione tra letture sincroniche e letture diacroniche dei testi.

Emblematica di quest'ultima istanza è la scelta di affidare il commento di *Esodo* (di cui questo primo volume dei due previsti si limita ai capitoli 1–15) a due studiosi — l'uno esperto di analisi di tipo sincronico, l'altro impegnato in ricerche di taglio storico-critico — al fine di favorire l'interazione dei piani. Attento al piano sincronico è Helmut Utzschneider,

<sup>5</sup> H. UTZSCHNEIDER — W. OSWALD, *Exodus 1–15* (IEKAT; Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 2013).

professore di Antico Testamento presso la *Augustana-Hochschule* in Neuendettelsau, mentre impegnato negli studi sulla diacronia del Pentateuco (e di *Esodo* in particolare) è Wolfgang Oswald, professore di Antico Testamento presso la Facoltà di Teologia Evangelica dell'Università di Tübingen.

Anche questo commentario si presenta come opera di rilievo, l'analisi è condotta in costante confronto con una bibliografia cospicua e significativa. La compresenza di prospettiva sincronica e prospettiva diacronica, che di per sé rappresenta uno dei pregi del volume, viene a risultare tuttavia non del tutto soddisfacente laddove sortisce un loro semplice accostamento e non un'effettiva interazione. Altro limite rilevabile nell'opera è la scelta di delimitare questo primo volume a *Esodo* 1–15, per plausibili valutazioni di ordine sincronico e diacronico: ciò impedisce talvolta un'opportuna considerazione complessiva dei contenuti del libro biblico.

### 1. *L'articolazione dell'opera*

Il volume si articola in un'ampia introduzione (pagine 17-55), nell'approfondito commento di *Esodo* 1–15 (57–345) e una serie di utili indici (347–370: abbreviazioni e sigle; strumenti fondamentali; bibliografia; parole ebraiche; indice tematico; indice delle citazioni). Nella presentazione dei contenuti, l'intera opera è utilmente corredata di occhielli che ne facilitano alquanto la lettura.

L'introduzione è suddivisa nettamente in due parti, differenti sia per la prospettiva considerata (sincronica nella prima, diacronica nella seconda) sia per l'oggetto in esame (il racconto dell'esodo nella prima, il libro dell'*Esodo* nella seconda). Nella prima parte, dopo aver considerato il rilievo estetico-letterario della spiegazione sincronica, si passa a considerare il racconto dell'esodo all'interno delle tradizioni narrative dell'Antico Testamento (*Genesi* — 2 *Re*), per verificare poi questo racconto come unità narrativa (mettendo a fuoco inizio, conclusione, tratti stilistici; e a seguire, struttura e intreccio con le loro varie articolazioni e connotazioni). Sempre in questa prima parte, si conclude prestando attenzione ai temi e alle intenzioni del racconto biblico dell'esodo: la valenza politico-teologica, la funzione di leggenda culturale della festa di Pasqua-Azzimi, il suo significato di "racconto-*rhilla*". Nella seconda parte dell'introduzione, dedicata ad ipotizzare il processo di formazione del libro dell'*Esodo*, oltre ad articolarne le diverse fasi compositive (cf. *infra*), lo studio si sofferma a delineare il senso di un'analisi di tipo diacronico, a offrire una sintesi della ricerca moderna sul libro, a porre la questione del genere letterario preminente, ad invitare a necessaria consapevolezza circa le possibilità



di recuperare l'effettiva consistenza storica dei fatti narrati e circa la necessità di cogliere gli aspetti simbolici della loro presentazione.

Coerentemente con l'articolazione narrativa rilevata in sede di introduzione, il commento al testo si occupa del prologo (Es 1,1-7) e delle successive sei fasi narrative (*Erzählphasen*), ciascuna suddivisa in eventuali cicli e in episodi. Accanto a introduzioni più o meno articolate alle singole fasi narrative (con le loro problematiche specifiche), ogni episodio vede considerazioni su testo e traduzione, l'analisi sincronica, l'analisi diacronica e una sintesi conclusiva che mira a porre in dialogo i due precedenti sguardi prospettici.

## 2. *L'ipotesi diacronica proposta*

Per quanto riguarda la diacronia di *Esodo*, gli Autori ipotizzano cinque passaggi che hanno portato alla configurazione attuale: l'antica narrazione dell'esodo; la "narrazione dell'esodo e del monte di Dio" (*EG-Erzählung, die Exodus-Gottesberg-Erzählung*); l'opera storica deuteronomistica (*DtrG*); la composizione sacerdotale (*P-Komposition*); la "composizione della *Torah*" (*die Tora-Komposition*)<sup>6</sup>.

Anche in questo caso, l'ipotesi avanzata circa la composizione del libro dell'*Esodo* si discosta dal modello dell'ipotesi documentaria e assume il paradigma dell'ipotesi dei complementi: di passaggio in passaggio l'antico racconto dell'esodo si trova inserito (con le debite integrazioni) in contesti letterari vieppiù ampi e/o diversamente connotati da un punto di vista di rilievo teologico complessivo. In tal modo viene evidenziata l'origine autonoma e il valore politico dell'antica tradizione dell'esodo; la prima espansione con i contenuti legali e istituzionali connessi all'alleanza al Sinai; il collegamento con la teologia deuteronomistica (una teologia chiaramente connotata: emblematiche, al riguardo, sono l'inserzione dell'episodio del vitello d'oro e la connessione con la prospettiva della presa di possesso della terra); il rilevante contributo della tradizione sacerdotale, soprattutto per il collegamento con le precedenti storie di *Genesi* e per l'aggiunta di istanze tipicamente sacerdotali, *in primis* l'elemento del santuario mobile; una serie di inserzioni redazionali attinenti il rilievo della figura di Mosè nel momento della delimitazione finale del Pentateuco in quanto tale.

<sup>6</sup> Per un quadro delle diverse stratificazioni (materiali loro attribuiti, datazione, ideologia, eventuale interazione rispetto al resto del Pentateuco o delle tradizioni narrative dell'antico Israele) rimandiamo a UTZSCHNEIDER – OSWALD, *Exodus 1–15*, 41-54.

### 3. Possibili rilievi critici

Il modello diacronico offerto circa la formazione di *Esodo* risulta ponderato e meritevole di attenzione e discussione. Tuttavia, senza entrare nel merito dell'attribuzione dei singoli segmenti, alcune osservazioni circa l'impianto complessivo possono essere avanzate in vista di ulteriori approfondimenti.

a) I termini ipotizzati circa l'interazione tra tradizioni dell'esodo e opera storica deuteronomistica destano qualche perplessità. Infatti, quali indicatori si hanno, nel testo, di un'interazione che, in tale opera, vada oltre i libri del *Deuteronomio* e di *Giosuè* o che, in *Esodo*, ponga riferimenti a elementi di libri successivi a questi due (*Giudici* — *2 Re*)? Inoltre, l'interazione tra tradizione deuteronomistica e tradizione sacerdotale si pone in termini di compromesso <sup>7</sup> o in termini di reinterpretazione e integrazione dei contenuti e della delimitazione della prima da parte della seconda (come si lascia intravedere nel volume in esame)?

b) La composizione sacerdotale (cui è attribuita la prima connessione tra *Genesi* ed *Esodo*) è datata verso la metà del IV secolo. Perché abbassare così tanto l'elaborazione di testi fondamentali per la comprensione del mondo, dell'identità e delle istituzioni di Israele (si pensi a *Genesi* 1; 6-9; 17; *Esodo* 25-40) e la loro configurazione unitaria con le vicende dell'esodo, in un'epoca così distante da quell'esilio che rappresentò un momento decisivo per la maturazione della fede monoteistica e dei termini identitari dell'Israele biblico? Altro interrogativo è legato all'estensione della composizione P, che secondo il nostro volume arriverebbe fino alla fine del libro di *Giosuè*. Se l'individuazione della fine dello scritto P rimane dibattuta, occorre riconoscere che tale delimitazione non rientra tra le ipotesi a confronto: infatti, è piuttosto comunemente riconosciuto il carattere non solo post-deuteronomistico, ma anche post-sacerdotale sia di pericopi quali Gs 24,1-28 sia di segmenti quali Gn 50,24-25; Es 13,19 e Gs 24,32, tra le poche connessioni che toccano gli estremi del cosiddetto "Esateuco" <sup>8</sup>. Infine, stante il crescente riconoscimento, all'interno degli studi sul Pentateuco, della consistenza dell'attività redazionale post-sacerdotale, la datazione così tardiva della com-

<sup>7</sup> Come prospettato da E. BLUM, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (WMANT 57; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984), e da E. BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189; Berlin – New York 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Tra le altre, si vedano, al riguardo, le considerazioni di T.C. RÖMER – M.Z. BRETTLER, «Deuteronomy 34 and the Case for a Persian Hexateuch», *JBL* 119 (2000) 401-419.

posizione P non obbliga a comprimere tale attività in un arco di tempo inverosimilmente ristretto?

c) Ogni passaggio ipotizzato alla base della formazione del libro dell'Esodo porta con sé l'integrazione di materiale consistente e di semplici aggiunte redazionali rispetto alla forma precedente: il che sembra indicare che tutti gli interventi redazionali siano collocati dentro elaborazioni ideologiche e letterarie di ampio respiro. Senza negare che talvolta così possa essere, è forse verosimile ipotizzare che, soprattutto nelle fasi più tardive, una serie di interventi redazionali abbiano avuto orizzonti più circoscritti, sia quanto a portata letteraria sia quanto a rilievo ideologico (come rilevabile anche all'interno di altri libri del Pentateuco<sup>9</sup>). Tale eventualità sembra non trovi diritto di cittadinanza nel nostro volume.

d) Infine, la scansione delle cinque tappe della formazione di Esodo (e, in parte, del Pentateuco) e la parallela delimitazione della stratificazione del testo sembra muoversi più nella logica della deduzione che in quella dell'induzione, che in esegesi dovrebbe essere prevalente. Talvolta si ha la sensazione che, invece di avanzare osservazioni complessive in base ai rilievi testuali, si determinino i diversi materiali testuali non in nome di effettive tensioni nella narrazione, bensì a partire dal quadro diacronico ipotizzato. L'impressione non pare dovuta soltanto all'inevitabile e comprensibile forma espositiva propria di un commentario. Così, per limitarsi a un esempio, se si considera l'analisi di un testo significativo come Esodo 14, si ha la sensazione che la valutazione dei vv. 16a e 31a<sup>bb</sup> come tardivi (appartenenti alla cosiddetta *Tora-Komposition*) non dipenda da effettive incongruenze testuali, ma dalla determinazione aprioristica del carattere tardivo del rilievo di alcuni aspetti concernenti Mosè (in particolare del bastone del suo comando e della fede nella sua figura)<sup>10</sup>.

### 3. *Accenni di comparazione dei due modelli diacronici*

Pur nell'inevitabile incertezza che, in assenza di un paradigma condiviso, segna la presente stagione degli studi sulla composizione del Pentateuco, e stante le differenze delle ipotesi avanzate circa la formazione del libro dell'Esodo da parte di Alberty e da parte di (Utzschneider e)

<sup>9</sup> Circa la varietà e la differente consistenza dell'attività redazionale nel Pentateuco, cf. J.-L. SKA, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake, IN 2006) 76-95.

<sup>10</sup> Si vedano, più dettagliatamente, le considerazioni presenti in UTZSCHNEIDER – OSWALD, *Exodus 1-15*, 52-54, 325.

Oswald, è significativo rilevare la loro convergenza su alcune prospettive di fondo.

Comune alle proposte avanzate è la presa di distanza dal paradigma dell'ipotesi documentaria a favore del modello dei complementi e, in parte, dei frammenti; la collocazione in epoca persiana della maggior parte dei passaggi significativi per la composizione del libro dell'*Esodo* e del Pentateuco; l'attribuzione alla tradizione sacerdotale della prima articolazione tra le tradizioni di *Genesi* e quelle di *Esodo*.

Passando a una valutazione complessiva, pur nella consapevolezza del carattere parziale dei due volumi e in attesa del completamento di entrambi, come pure in attesa di ulteriori verifiche e approfondimenti, la proposta di Albertz circa la composizione di *Esodo* sembra presentare maggiori elementi di plausibilità rispetto a quella di Utzschneider e Oswald. A fronte di una plausibile linearità della prima (stanti i rilievi avanzati), della seconda non pare convincente *in primis* il collegamento della narrazione dell'esodo con l'intera opera storica deuteronomistica, come pure il carattere così tardivo della composizione sacerdotale e la sua estensione all'Esateuco.

### III. IL COMMENTARIO DI V.P. HAMILTON <sup>11</sup>

Il terzo commentario che possiamo ad esaminare proviene, a differenza dei precedenti, dal contesto statunitense. Ne è autore Victor Paul Hamilton, professore emerito di Bibbia e Teologia presso l'*Asbury University*, in Wilmore (Kentucky).

#### 1. *Impostazione dell'opera*

Il commentario pone l'analisi su un piano esclusivamente sincronico. L'introduzione vera e propria (di sole nove pagine) è limitata ad una rassegna complessiva dei contenuti narrativi e teologici del libro dell'*Esodo*. Il commento vero e proprio del libro biblico si estende per ben 621 pagine ed è suddiviso in sette parti, non corrispondenti peraltro alle quindici individuate in sede introduttiva (xxviii-xxix). Al termine del volume trovano spazio l'abbondante bibliografia (esclusivamente in lingua inglese) citata, l'indice degli autori, quello delle citazioni e quello tematico.

<sup>11</sup> V.P. HAMILTON, *Exodus. An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academics, 2011).

Risulta apprezzabile il fatto che, complessivamente, il commentario dedichi anche alla seconda parte di *Esodo*, abitualmente oggetto di minor considerazione, la medesima attenzione riservata alla prima: il che riflette la consapevolezza, ben espressa in sede introduttiva, che il tema della liberazione non esaurisce l'interesse del libro biblico, altrettanto attento ai temi dell'alleanza con Dio e dell'allestimento della dimora divina in mezzo al suo popolo.

Il commento delle singole pericopi offre abbondanza di osservazioni grammaticali e lessicali, anche in collegamento con la traduzione proposta, e accumula osservazioni di ordine descrittivo, sia su singoli lessemi o singole tematiche, in confronto sia con i dati veterotestamentari che con quelli neotestamentari. Il riferimento storico, anche a motivo della scelta sincronica di fondo, si limita a comparare, quando possibile, determinati passi con opere delle culture limitrofe.

## 2. Osservazioni critiche

Il prevalere di osservazioni di ordine descrittivo (lo stesso livello cui sembra attestarsi la pur cospicua considerazione del dibattito esegetico) lascia la sensazione di rimanere sulla superficie del testo, senza entrare effettivamente in alcun nodo del suo sviluppo. Pur tralasciando osservazioni di ordine diacronico, maggiori attenzioni avrebbero meritato, ad esempio, considerazioni di ordine narrativo circa l'insieme del libro e circa le singole sezioni (articolazione della trama, lettore implicato, caratterizzazione dei personaggi, ecc.), che invece non trovano spazio nella trattazione <sup>12</sup>.

Per non limitarsi che a un esempio di tale approccio di Hamilton, possiamo considerare il commento al comandamento del sabato presente in Es 20,8-11 <sup>13</sup>. Gran parte delle osservazioni sono dedicate a recuperare tutto ciò che l'Antico Testamento afferma circa l'osservanza del sabato o istituzioni religiose correlate, come pure a valutare in prospettiva cristiana il significato di tale osservanza a partire dalle riflessioni neotestamentarie. Poca attenzione viene rilevata alla motivazione di tale osservanza: si evidenzia il collegamento con Gn 2,2-3, ma ci si limita a un piano descrittivo, senza interrogarsi sul rilievo teologico che tale prospettiva riserva al sabato stesso. Anche rispetto alla differente motivazione dell'osservanza

<sup>12</sup> A questo riguardo, è eloquente la differenza qualitativa rispetto alle considerazioni sincroniche presenti nel volume di Utzschneider e Oswald: si veda anche solamente UTZSCHNEIDER – OSWALD, *Exodus 1-15*, 23-33.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. HAMILTON, *Exodus*, 337-340.

sabbatica presente in Dt 5,15 (non la creazione, ma l'esodo), la preoccupazione è di sottolineare la compatibilità con quanto affermato in Es 20,11, non di evidenziare e confrontare la ricchezza di prospettive teologiche differenti. D'altronde, non ci si può attendere questo da chi, in precedenza, per risolvere le differenze tra le due versioni del decalogo (Es 20,2-17; Dt 5,6-21) afferma che il medesimo autore divino non era obbligato ad evitare variazioni e a presentare le sue richieste in fotocopia <sup>14</sup>; o, per spiegare le proibizioni del decalogo, si sofferma a compararlo con il regolamento di una piscina <sup>15</sup>.

Il tenore di tali affermazioni e, più complessivamente, dell'analisi esegetica condotta da Hamilton in questo volume vuole rispondere a uno degli intendimenti manifestati in sede di prefazione <sup>16</sup>: essere testo di riferimento per il ministero della Parola per quanti sono pastori nel popolo di Dio. Meno apprezzabile risulta, invece, il tenore del volume qualora — come detto nella medesima sede — si ritenga che esso debba essere parte del confronto accademico: fatte salve alcune osservazioni di ordine linguistico o alcune rassegne di citazioni su singole tematiche, non si comprende quale possa essere l'effettivo apporto del volume alla ricerca esegetica. Peraltro, ci si può chiedere se anche il servizio alla divulgazione pastorale, qualora non voglia ridursi a semplice ed abbondante rassegna di “spunti predicabili”, non necessiti di approfondimenti (anche semplicemente a livello sincronico) di maggior consistenza.

#### IV. UN POSSIBILE TEMA DI COMPARAZIONE: L'ARTICOLAZIONE DEL LIBRO DELL'ESODO

Stante la differente estensione di capitoli di *Esodo* considerati nei tre commentari e le differenti opzioni metodologiche in gioco, limitiamo il confronto comune ai tre commentari a un aspetto significativo per gli studi sul secondo libro del canone biblico: l'individuazione della sua articolazione. Si tratta, infatti, di una difficoltà tipica degli studi su questo libro biblico, che manca di evidenti segnali linguistici al riguardo e che obbliga, pertanto, a considerazioni di ordine tematico. La struttura ipotizzata consente di aprire una finestra specifica sui tre commentari in esame, sufficientemente eloquente del loro differente modo di procedere.

<sup>14</sup> Così HAMILTON, *Exodus*, 315.

<sup>15</sup> Così HAMILTON, *Exodus*, 316-317.

<sup>16</sup> Il riferimento è a HAMILTON, *Exodus*, xi.

### 1. *La proposta di Albertz*

R. Albertz <sup>17</sup> riconosce in *Esodo* due parti principali, dedicata l'una alla liberazione di Israele (capitoli 1– 8) e l'altra all'obbligazione di Israele (capitoli 19–40). La prima parte è ulteriormente suddivisa tra 1,1 – 13,16 (liberazione dall'Egitto), 13,17 – 15,21 (salvezza al Mar delle Canne) e 15,22 – 18,27 (protezione e prova nel deserto). La seconda parte è a sua volta suddivisa in quattro sezioni: 19–24 (rivelazione dei comandamenti divini e stipulazione dell'alleanza), 25–31 (rivelazione del santuario e del suo arredo), 32–34 (apostasia da Yhwh e rinnovo dell'alleanza), 35–40 (costruzione e allestimento del santuario in realizzazione delle disposizioni divine).

La proposta di Albertz rileva, effettivamente, le parti comunemente riconosciute nel libro e si preoccupa di evitarne la semplice giustapposizione, fornendo ampi motivi di plausibilità. Il che non impedisce di muovere qualche rilievo critico, fermi restando i generali termini di incertezza della questione.

- 1) La scansione in due parti non sembra render sufficientemente ragione della sezione di transizione di Es 15,22 – 18,27, che di per sé non attiene né alla liberazione di Israele né alla sua obbligazione al Sinai: pertanto, la collocazione nella prima parte non risulta del tutto convincente. Sempre all'interno della prima parte, inoltre, la suddivisione tra 1,1 – 13,16 e 13,17 – 15,21 pone uno stacco eccessivo (certo non equiparabile a quello tra 15,21 e 15,22) tra due parti strettamente connesse quanto a logica narrativa: l'episodio del miracolo del mare, infatti, è ancora implicato nel confronto duro e serrato tra Yhwh e il faraone che ha contraddistinto i capitoli precedenti e ne rappresenta l'esito risolutivo.
- 2) Nella seconda parte, la tematica individuata, l'obbligazione di Israele, mentre ben concorre a delineare il significato dei capitoli 19–24 e 32–34, rischia di non rendere sufficientemente ragione del tema centrale dei capitoli 25–31 e 35–40, la dimora divina in mezzo al suo popolo. Questa non è tanto parte dell'obbligazione di Israele, quanto dell'implicazione di Yhwh con la vicenda del suo popolo.

Pur riconoscendo alla proposta di Albertz di cogliere i passaggi significativi di *Esodo*, pare preferibile ricercare un'ipotesi di strutturazione che renda maggiormente ragione dell'articolazione delle singole sezioni, senza forzarle in una struttura bipartita non del tutto soddisfacente <sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. ALBERTZ, *Exodus 1–18*, 15–17.

<sup>18</sup> Per un'ipotesi che sembra render maggiormente ragione dello sviluppo narrativo e tematico del libro dell'*Esodo*, rimandiamo a J.-L. SKA, «Le Livre de l'Exode. Questions fondamentales et questions ouvertes», *NRT* 133 (2011) 368–373.

## 2. *La proposta di Utzschneider e Oswald*

H. Utzschneider e W. Oswald non affrontano la questione dell'articolazione complessiva del libro dell'*Esodo*, limitandosi a considerare quella del racconto dell'esodo racchiuso in 1,1 – 15,22<sup>19</sup>, oggetto del volume in esame. Tale delimitazione, in sé corretta quanto all'azione considerata, impedisce di cogliere eventuali connessioni tematiche con la parte successiva del libro biblico e, salvo diverse indicazioni nel secondo volume in programma, induce a ritenere che le diverse sezioni di Esodo siano percepite come semplicemente giustapposte, non articolate in alcun modo. In questo senso, sarebbe stato preferibile che gli Autori si fossero soffermati in sede introduttiva a considerare l'articolazione dell'intero libro dell'*Esodo*, al pari di quanto fatto (necessariamente) per le considerazioni di ordine diacronico.

All'interno della sezione considerata, gli Autori riconoscono un'articolazione in sei fasi narrative: 1,8 – 2,22 (gli Egiziani opprimono gli Israeliti con lavori servili; infanzia e giovinezza di Mosè); 2,23 – 6,1 (dal monte di Dio all'Egitto); 6,2 – 7,13 (Yhwh lega la liberazione degli Israeliti al suo nome e invia nuovamente Mosè e Aronne dal faraone); 7,14 – 11,10 (il racconto delle piaghe); 12,1 – 13,16 (*Pesach-Massot* e la partenza degli Israeliti dall'Egitto); 13,17 – 15,21 (il racconto del miracolo del mare).

Pur riconoscendo la difficoltà di delineare in un'articolazione unitaria la varietà dei materiali presenti in questi quindici capitoli, la scansione proposta presenta alcuni, limitati motivi di perplessità. Intanto essa non evidenzia uno sviluppo tematico o narrativo: perlomeno a livello di titolatura non si puntualizza l'azione in gioco e, dunque, presupposti, complicazioni, sviluppo, esito conseguente, risoluzione. Tale mancata sottolineatura provoca, almeno in parte, la sensazione di un accostamento disomogeneo delle parti, senza che affiori il significato di ogni fase narrativa rispetto all'insieme. Così, se Es 2,23-25 rappresenta il vero e proprio inizio dell'azione, quanto precede dovrebbe essere configurato come premessa e forse sarebbe preferibile articolare diversamente alcuni passaggi genericamente accomunati nella fase 2,23 – 6,1. Inoltre, alcune delimitazioni sembrano richiedere valutazioni ulteriori: così, ad esempio, pare preferibile riconoscere l'inizio del racconto delle piaghe in 7,1, dal momento che 7,1-7 presenta il programma narrativo della sezione, mentre i vv. 8-13 presentano il segno preliminare.

<sup>19</sup> Si veda UTZSCHNEIDER – OSWALD, *Exodus 1-15*, 23-32.



### 3. *La proposta di Hamilton*

Ci soffermiamo, infine, a considerare l'articolazione dei contenuti di *Esodo* evidenziata da V.P. Hamilton <sup>20</sup>. Dopo aver citato, senza valutazione, le strutture proposte da C. Westermann (1967), M.S. Smith (1997), J.G. Janzen (1997) e T. Longman (2009) perché creative e interessanti, l'Autore passa alla sua proposta, scandita (anche dai termini in rima, che manteniamo in inglese) in quindici punti: *oppression* (1,1 – 2,25); *trepidation* (3,1 – 4,31); *rejection* (5,1-23); *reaffirmation* (6,1-30); *confrontation* (7,1 – 12,30); *liberation* (12,31 – 14,31); *celebration* (15,1-21); *itineration* (15,22 – 17,15); *administration* (18,1-27); *legislation* (19,1 – 24,18); *specifications* (25,1 – 31,18); *deviation* (32,1 – 33,23); *reconciliation* (34,1-35); *construction* (35,1 – 40,33); *glorification* (40,34-38).

Purtroppo, l'assenza di argomenti a sostegno della proposta impedisce al lettore una effettiva valutazione di essa: può soltanto accettarla o rifiutarla. In tal modo, si trasmette l'idea che il riconoscimento della strutturazione di un'opera letteraria antica possa rappresentare un fatto arbitrario, lasciato alla discrezione personale, mentre si tratta di un primo modo di fornire al lettore significative chiavi di lettura: si tratta, per così dire, di tentare di recuperare l'indice dell'opera (elemento assente nelle opere antiche), cioè la logica dell'articolazione dei contenuti. Una logica che non affiora dalla proposta di Hamilton, che pare limitarsi ad un piano genericamente descrittivo.

Guardando, poi, all'interno della proposta, talvolta si ha la sensazione di frammenti privi di orizzonti più ampi e pertinenti. Così, ad esempio, parlare di *confrontation* a proposito delle piaghe d'Egitto è certamente plausibile, però sottace totalmente la funzione "cognitiva" e "rivelatrice" delle piaghe. In Es 1,1 – 15,21, infatti, il confronto tra Yhwh e il faraone si gioca in gran parte sul riconoscimento del primo da parte del secondo: si vedano, in questa linea, Es 5,2; 7,5 e le "formule di riconoscimento" presenti nel racconto delle piaghe e perfino in Es 14,4.18.25. In altri casi, si ha la sensazione di titoli non molto precisi. Così *specifications*, *construction* e *glorification* per le sezioni concernenti l'allestimento del santuario mobile risultano piuttosto generici e non sembrano render ragione adeguata dello spazio (tredici capitoli su quaranta) e dell'importanza che tale tematica riceve nello sviluppo del libro dell'Esodo e nella messa a punto dell'identità di Israele.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. HAMILTON, *Exodus*, xxvii-xxix.

## V. CONSIDERAZIONI CONCLUSIVE

Accanto a un volume (quello di Hamilton) di livello meno significativo, i commentari di Albertz e di Utzschneider e Oswald meritano considerazione e, specie se completati dal commento alla parte restante di *Esodo*, possono rappresentare un necessario riferimento per il dibattito esegetico sul secondo libro del Pentateuco, alla pari di altri commentari che in tempi passati o recenti hanno segnato gli studi al riguardo <sup>21</sup>.

Stanti le differenti declinazioni rilevate, è interessante riconoscere nei due volumi una convergenza di fondo su alcuni aspetti metodologici e su alcune valutazioni di merito.

È apprezzabile il superamento, non solo in linea di principio, della contrapposizione tra approccio sincronico e approccio diacronico e della consapevolezza della necessità di una loro interazione.

Circa le ipotesi sulla formazione del Pentateuco, se il dibattito rimane aperto e le soluzioni proposte divergono, è interessante osservare che le ipotesi esaminate non concorrono ad alimentare ulteriori frammentazioni, ma — come rilevato in sede di comparazione — iniziano lentamente a convergere, anche tra chi si è definitivamente distanziato dal paradigma dell'ipotesi documentaria, su alcuni assunti <sup>22</sup>.

Anche attraverso questi due volumi procede la messa a fuoco di rinnovati paradigmi circa la composizione del Pentateuco o l'esegesi di *Esodo*. Non ce ne si può che rallegrare, in attesa di ulteriori sviluppi.

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<sup>21</sup> Si pensi, tra gli altri, a B.S. CHILDS, *The Book of Exodus. A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA 1974); a C. HOUTMAN, *Exodus. I-IV* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Kampen 1993-2002); e a T.B. DOZEMAN, *Commentary on Exodus* (Eerdmans Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Ciò non significa affermare che il paradigma dell'ipotesi documentaria sia scomparso dal dibattito sulla formazione del Pentateuco. Non solo tale paradigma non è mai venuto meno, ma negli ultimi anni è presente una nuova generazione di studiosi che lo difende strenuamente, perlomeno sul piano della plausibilità letteraria (mentre non risulta un particolare interesse per la datazione delle fonti e per il loro retroterra storico): si tratta di B.J. Schwartz (il padre ispiratore), J.S. Baden, J. Stackert e Tz.L. Yoreh. Per una sintesi efficace della sensibilità di questi studiosi, rimandiamo a J.S. BADEN, *The Composition of the Pentateuch. Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New Haven, CT 2012), spec. 246-249.

# RECENSIONES

## Vetus Testamentum

Hannes BEZZEL, *Saul. Israels König in Tradition, Redaktion und früherer Rezeption* (FAT 97). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2015. xii + 303 p. 16,5 × 25

Bezzel untersucht in seiner Jenenser Habilitationsschrift die (relativ) ältesten Quellen zur Gestalt Sauls, um zu einem kritisch reflektierten Gesamtbild zu gelangen. Dieses fällt in historischer Hinsicht minimalistisch aus. Gleich in der Einleitung — vielleicht doch etwas früh? — bezeichnet Bezzel „die Frage ‚wer war Saul?‘, historisch gestellt, zwar als überaus spannend, aus den vorhandenen Quellen jedoch als nicht zu beantworten“; es gebe „Saul nur als literarische Gestalt“ (3), weshalb im vorliegenden Buch das „Themenfeld des ‚historischen Sauls‘ [sic] ... unbearbeitet“ bleibe (6).

Von Beginn der Traditionsbildung an wurde die „Gestalt Sauls [...] in der Überlieferung vorgefunden und indem sie gefunden wurde, wurde sie im interpretatorischen Akt zugleich als jemand oder etwas erfunden“ (3: „erfinden“ im Sinne von Fiktion). So kann Bezzel in den drei Hauptkapiteln seiner Arbeit den literaturgeschichtlichen Weg im Prinzip rückwärts gehen: von der „frühen Rezeptionsgeschichte“ (Ben Sira, Qumran, Pseudo-Philo, Josephus: 13-81) zurück zum Bild Sauls in der Chronik (82-148) und noch weiter zurück zu dem in den Samuelbüchern (149-234) — aber eben nicht bis zum historischen Saul. Ein „Resümee“ (234-239), ein Anhang mit „Textbearbeitungen aus Sam“ (241-258), eine Bibliographie (259-286) sowie Stellen- und Personenregister (287-303) beschließen das Buch.

*Die Frühe Rezeptionsgeschichte.* Hier wendet sich Bezzel zuerst dem „Väterlob“ *Ben Siras* zu (13-27). Saul kommt im Väterlob namentlich gar nicht vor. Um ihn „zu finden, ist man an Samuel gewiesen“; in den ihm gewidmeten acht Versen läßt sich Saul „dreimal entdecken“ (21), nämlich in Sir 46,13.19.20, wo vielleicht auf 1Sam 9,6.8 und 14,47 (MT), jedenfalls auf 1Sam 12,2 und 1Sam 28 angespielt werde. Durch „die Vermeidung der Namensnennung“ wolle Ben Sira Saul offenbar „einer *damnatio memoriae* bzw. *abolitio nominis* anheimfallen“ lassen (24).

In den Schriften von *Qumran* ist nur an einer „einzigen Stelle [...] eindeutig von Saul die Rede“ (30), nämlich in einem Fragment von 4Q252, dem früher so genannten Genesis-Pescher. Hier wird Gen 36,12a aufgerufen und kommentiert. Das Bibelzitat übersetzt Bezzel so: „Timna war eine Nebenfrau von Elifas, dem Sohn Esaus, und sie gebar ihm den Amalek, das ist (,) der (,) den Saul schlug“ (32); mit der eigenartigen Wiedergabe will er anzeigen, dass der Formulierung nach sowohl Saul Amalek „geschlagen“ haben kann (vgl. 1Sam 15) als auch Amalek bzw. ein Amalekiter Saul (vgl. 2Sam 1). Der Kommentar dazu lautet: „Wie er dem Mose sagte: Am Ende der Tage wirst du das Gedächtnis Amaleks austilgen von unter dem Himmel“ (33), was auf Dtn 25,19 bzw. Ex 17,14 anspielt. Saul

habe demnach seine „heilsgeschichtliche Aufgabe“, die Vernichtung Amaleks, gar nicht erfüllen können, weil das „Ende der Tage“ noch nicht gekommen, mithin die „Zeit [...] noch nicht reif“ war (35); darin läge eine Entlastung Sauls.

In *Pseudo-Philos* „*Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*“ nimmt Saul „eine übertragende Stellung“ ein (40). Der Autor unterschlägt manches aus der biblischen Überlieferung, z. B. den Titel „Gesalbter“ oder die Herkunft aus Benjamin (als Efraimit war Saul eindeutiger *Nordisraelit*). *Pseudo-Philo* war ein „Neudeuteronomist“ (48) mit ausgeprägt „theologischer Reflexion über das Wirken Gottes in der Geschichte und den Zusammenhang von Schuld und Strafe“ (49). Er behandelt Samuel- und Chronikbücher „nicht als alternative, sondern als komplementäre Werke“ (51). Sauls „Rolle im göttlichen Plan ist es [...] von Anfang an zu scheitern, und da er dieser Erwartung gerecht wird, erweist sich, daß Gott bei der Einsetzung der Monarchie nicht etwa zunächst eine falsche, sondern genau die richtige Wahl getroffen hat [...] Saul hat von Anfang an keine Chance, aber er wird dafür verurteilt, sie nicht zu nutzen“ — eine Logik, die man „mit Blick auf das Individuum Saul [...] geradezu als zynisch“ bezeichnen könnte (58).

*Josephus* wendet sich (auch) an „ein heidnisches Publikum — und durchaus mit apologetischem Interesse“ (60). Ihm geht es „nicht vorrangig um theologische Geschichtsdeutung, sondern darum, interessierten Intellektuellen Geschichte und Kultur des Judentums näherzubringen“ (60). Im Zuge dessen rückt er Saul in ein positives Licht, seine „Vorzüge und seine offensichtliche Eignung für das höchste Staatsamt werden“ gegenüber der Bibel „noch vermehrt“ (61). Wenn sich Saul laut 1Sam 10,22 beim Tross versteckt, dann sei „dies keinesfalls als Zeichen von Feigheit zu deuten“ (65), sondern als Bescheidenheit. Das Massaker an den Amalektern vollzog er nicht aus Grausamkeit, sondern in der Meinung, von Gott den Befehl erhalten zu haben. Agag schonte er nicht aus Ungehorsam, sondern gerührt durch „des königlichen Kollegen Schönheit“ (67). Das Massaker an den Priestern von Nob ist unverzeihlich, doch veranschaulicht es „beispielhaft die Korruptibilität durch Macht“ (69) — „eine recht unverhohlene Kritik an den gegenwärtigen Zuständen des [römischen] Imperiums“ (70). „Saul, mag sein Ende auch tragisch sein und mag er auch schuldhaftige Verfehlungen begangen haben, vereint doch in sich mustergültig die Tugenden eines Herrschers“ (75).

*Die Chronik*. Bezzel hebt zunächst einen innerchronistischen Widerspruch hervor: Saul begegnet innerhalb des Stammbaums Benjamins in 1Chr 8,33-40 und 9,39-44, wobei ihm eine Nachkommenschaft über 16 Generationen zugesprochen wird. Demgegenüber heißt es in 1Chr 10,6, auf Gilboa seien Saul, seine drei Söhne und „sein ganzes Haus“ umgekommen. Dies lasse auf „unterschiedliche chronistische Verfasser“ schließen (88), wobei die Genealogie das relativ ältere und die Darstellung in 1Chr 10 das jüngere Stratum darstelle. Noch davor habe es in der Chronik lediglich eine einzige, ganz knappe Anspielung auf Saul gegeben: nämlich in einem Hinweis anlässlich der Königserhebung Davids: „Schon früher, schon damals, schon als Saul König war [...]“ (1Chr 11,2). Diese erratische Bemerkung sei zuerst durch die Saul-Benjamin-Genealogie und dann durch die Erzählung von Sauls Tod ausgestaltet worden (89). Man sieht, Bezzel führt die Klinge der Literarkritik entschlossen und ohne jede Scheu vor Minimalismen. Später wird er noch die chronistischen Stufen IV und V präsentieren: in Gestalt des angeblichen Zusatzes 1Chr 10,13b und des vermeintlich noch jüngeren Erzählzuges von der Verbringung des Kopfes Sauls in den Dagontempel, 1Chr 10,9-10 (so zusammenfassend 111-112, wo gar noch die Spekulation folgt, dies habe

wiederum auf 1Sam 17,54 und 31,9 zurückgewirkt und „womöglich“ erst die Erzählung 1Samuel 5 hervorgerufen).

Das chronistische Urteil über Saul in 1Chr 10,13f. mache „zum einen klar, daß es sich beim Übergang der Herrschaft auf den Sohn Isais [...] nicht um Usurpation, sondern um einen Akt der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit gehandelt habe, der als Antwort auf Sauls ‚Untreue‘ zu verstehen sei“. Zweitens werde hier „ein Gegenbild zum frommen Davididen Josia nach II Chr 32,21“ gezeichnet, vielleicht auch zum „pius David“. Drittens „erlangt das Geschick Sauls sowohl geschichtstheologisch als auch hamartiologisch paradigmatische Bedeutung“ (96). Was das Verhältnis der Chronik zu 1-2Samuel betrifft, meint Bezzel, „daß die Vorlage der chronistischen Grundschrift [!] durchaus als Samuelrolle zu bezeichnen wäre, die freilich mit keiner ihrer erhaltenen Fassungen identisch gewesen sein dürfte. Für die interpretatorische Praxis im Blick auf Saul bedeutet das: Es ist sowohl mit chronistischen Änderungen gegenüber 1Samuel 31 als auch dort mit (nach)chronistischen Einflüssen [...] zu rechnen“ (97-98). Diese Hypothese ist für Bezzeles methodischen Ansatz charakteristisch: so kompliziert und so offen für literarkritische Einschnitte und Spätdatierungen wie möglich.

An zwei Detailanalysen mag die (übertriebene) Raffinesse Bezzel'scher Exegese aufgezeigt sein. Laut 1Sam 31,6 MT fielen neben Saul, seinen Söhnen und seinem Waffenträger auch „alle seine Männer“. Diese fehlen in LXX<sup>B</sup>, was nach Bezzel ursprünglich ist. Woher kommen „die Männer Sauls“ in MT? Antwort: Aus der Chronik, und zwar in deren dritter Fassung. Diese ersetzte nämlich bei der Nacherzählung von 1Samuel 31 (ältere Fassung, noch ohne „Männer“) den Waffenträger „durch das dem [sic] Konsonantenbestand nahezu gleich lange“ — welch seltsames Argument! — „und sein ganzes Haus“. Dass in der Benjamin-Genealogie (zweite Chr-Fassung) noch eine ellenlange Nachkommenschaft Sauls aufgezählt war, störte nicht, weil mit dem auf Gilboa gestorbenen „Haus Sauls“ lediglich die Dynastie gemeint sein konnte und ein Weiterleben der Familie danach durchaus noch möglich war (womit der angebliche Widerspruch, der zur Unterscheidung von Fassung eins und zwei führte, relativiert ist). „Ein Glossator, der zeitlich später anzusiedeln ist als die Septuagintavorlage der Samuelbücher, interpretierte [...] ‚sein ganzes Haus‘ [in der Chronik, *nota bene*] [...] nicht als die Dynastie, sondern als die Gesamtheit der Saul nahestehenden Gefolgsleute, und trug diese in Form ‚aller seiner Männer‘ in I Sam 31,6 ein“ (100-101). Schlichtere Gemüter vermögen in den „Männern Sauls“ dessen Leibwache zu sehen, die mit ihrem Herrn auf Gilboa fiel (was manchen Tradenten vielleicht ein wenig viel der Ehre schien, daher — oder schlicht aufgrund eines Versehens — ihre Auslassung in LXX<sup>B</sup>).

Das zweite Detail betrifft das Schicksal von Sauls Kopf. Nach 1Sam 31,9 MT wurde er vom toten Rumpf getrennt, was wiederum in LXX<sup>B</sup> fehlt. Stattdessen ist dort vom „Umwenden“ des Leichnams die Rede — laut Bezzel zur Identifizierung des nach seinem Suizid auf dem Bauch liegenden Toten. Dies gibt die Chronik (wieder: dritte Fassung) wieder mit „sie hoben ihn auf“: eigentlich auch zum Zweck der Identifizierung, nun aber missverstanden als Hochheben eines zuvor abgetrennten Kopfes, welchen die Chronik dann in den Dagontempel verbracht werden lässt. Dies wiederum führt zum Abschlagen des Kopfes in der MT-Sam-Fassung (105-107). Solche Exegese erinnert an ein Billardspiel über mehrere Banden, welches die Fähigkeit eines Normalspielers übersteigt, zumal dann, wenn ihn die Sorge plagt, die Banden gehörten zu verschiedenen Tischen. Wieder gäbe es einen einfachen, nachvollziehbaren Grund für die Textfassung in LXX<sup>B</sup>: Die Enthauptung eines israelitischen Königs war denn doch zu unehrenhaft.

*Die Samuelbücher.* Bezzel nimmt sich zunächst die beiden Berichte vom Tod Sauls vor. Zur Erklärung der zwischen ihnen bestehenden Differenzen bevorzugt

Bezzel dasjenige Modell, wonach 2Samuel 1 auf der Basis von 1Samuel 31 verfasst worden ist (125). Allerdings lägen beide Versionen in einer erweiterten Form vor. In 1Samuel 31 seien sekundäre Passagen in 31,7 (angeblich ein kontradiktorischer Bezug zu Jos 13,2: 127), in 31,9b.10a (angeblich eine unsachgemäße Ausweitung auf das philistäische Kerngebiet: 128) sowie in der Nennung der Namen der gefallen Saul-Söhne in 31,2 auszumachen (angeblich waren es genau die in 1Sam 14,49 aufgeführten: 130). Noch stärker überarbeitet sei 2Sam 1: Das „ursprüngliche Ende der Geschichte“ bildet V. \*12, die Trauer Davids um Saul (133). Das Verhör des Boten durch David und dessen Hinrichtung in V. 13-16 zeigt „ganz das Bild eines kommenden Herrschers, dessen ganze Loyalität Israel, seinem König und seinem Gott JHWH gilt“ (136). Auf eben dieser Ebene liege auch die Botenrede in V. 5-10, innerhalb derer wiederum V. 8 „einen späteren Nachtrag“ darstelle (138). Der Grundbestand von 2Samuel 1 liegt demnach in V. 1aa.ba.2aa<sub>2</sub>.β. 3.4.11.12a.ba<sub>1</sub>β vor (ein bemerkenswertes Konvolut!). Diese Erzählung sei in Kenntnis von 1Sam 4,16-17 und „in direkter Anknüpfung an das vorangegangene Kapitel“ geschrieben (140). Dass in ihm nur von Jonatan, nicht auch von den anderen Saul-Söhnen die Rede sei, eröffne „die Möglichkeit für den Eintrag des Isch-Boschet-Interregnums in II Sam 2-4“ (140 — es ist m. E. tollkühn, diese gesamten Kapitel mit ihren zahlreichen, schwer erfindbaren Informationen als Entfaltung einer Lücke in einem selbst schon sekundären Text zu klassifizieren).

Ein „Ende vor dem Ende“ Sauls (142) gibt es laut Bezzel bereits in 1Sam 14,47-51 (natürlich nur im Grundbestand). Aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach sei „die älteste Saultradition *vor* diesem Abschluß zu finden“ (143). Dem Summarium über Saul sei das über David in 2Samuel 8 nachgebildet worden (144-145).

Vom „Ende“ der Saul-Überlieferung geht Bezzel zu ihrem „Anfang“. Dabei stößt er auf einen „zweifach erfolgenden Erzähleinsatz“ (149): einen älteren in 1Samuel 9-10 und einen jüngeren in 1Samuel 1. Als „Grundschrift“ in 1Sam 9,1-10,16 bestimmt er 9,1.2a.3.4bβ.5aβ.b.6-8.10-12a.13aa.14a.25b; 10,2-5aa.b.6aa.b.7.9b.10aa. Besonders erstaunlich unter diesen Operationen ist die Reduktion der Begegnung beider Protagonisten auf das Sätzchen in 9,25b: „Und er redete mit Saul auf dem Dach“ — worauf dann sogleich die Beauftragung in 10,\*2-7 gefolgt sei. Bezzel selbst stellt fest: „Eine derartige Grundschrift scheint der Apologetik zu bedürfen“ (170), stehe doch der „Vorwurf des literarkritischen Kahlschlags“ und der „Hyperkritik“ im Raum (171). In der Tat, dieser Vorwurf ist ihm kaum zu ersparen. Was die „Erweiterungen“ von 1Sam 9,1-10,16 anlangt, gebe es „gute Gründe, die gegen die literarische Einheitlichkeit aller Ergänzungen“ sprechen (172). Auf einer ersten Ergänzungsebene wurden die Person Samuels und das Thema des Königtums eingebracht (176). Klar jünger sei der Motivzug von Sauls Raserei in 10,6aβ und 10,10aβ-13 (177). „Der Salbungseintrag von 9,14b-17; 10,1 wird sich [...] ‚deuteronomistisch‘ nennen lassen“ (175), die „Bankethalle“ von 9,22 sei „griechischer Herkunft“ (176). In einer Zusammenfassung (177-178) benennt Bezzel nicht weniger als neun Hände (darunter vier „deuteronomistische“), die an der Entstehung der Erzählung beteiligt gewesen sein sollen. Die Frage nach der ‚technischen‘ Möglichkeit einer derart diffizilen Fortschreibungsstätigkeit und nach dem Verbleib nicht-fortgeschriebener Kopien wird nicht gestellt.

Schließlich der „Anfang vor dem Anfang: I Sam 1“ (179). In der Hanna-Erzählung sollen nicht nur die Eli-Söhne in V. 3b und das Nasiräer-Gelübde in V. 11 sekundär sein — das ist nachvollziehbar —, sondern auch Hannas Widersacherin Peninna in V. 6-7 sowie der gesamte Erzählzug von Samuels Übereignung

an das Heiligtum in Schilo in V. 21-28. Die „Grunderzählung“ liege in V. 1-3a. 4f. 7aa.b. 8-10. 12-15. 17-20 vor. Den „ursprünglichen Abschluß“ dieser „Geburtsgeschichte Samuels“ habe man in 3,19ab<sup>a</sup> zu sehen (187); in den dazwischen liegenden Kapiteln 2 und 3 seien die Samuel-Notizen 2,11b. 18. 21b. 26; 3,1a Marker einer „sukzessive[n] Entstehung“ (186).

Nunmehr kann Bezzel den Sack zubinden: „I Sam 1, der Anfang in Ephraim, wurde I Sam 9, dem Anfang in Benjamin, vorgeschaltet — unter anderem mit der Folge, daß Samuel in das Gewand des Gottesmannes der älteren Saulgeschichte schlüpfen konnte“ (192). „Korrespondiert also dem Anfang Sauls *ohne* Samuel in 9,1 eine Saulgeschichte samt Nachruf *ohne* Philister [in 14,\*47-52], so entspricht dem Anfang der mit 1,1 um die Ladeepisode zum ‚Samuel-Saul-Komplex‘ samt Philistern erweiterten Saulgeschichte auch ein Ende mit und durch diese: I Sam 31“ (193). Die so umrissene jüngere Saulgeschichte sei immerhin noch „vordeuteronomistisch“ (193).

In einem Schlusskapitel entfaltet Bezzel die beiden von ihm erhobenen Versionen der Saulgeschichte: die ältere (mit der Überschrift Esel – Ammoniter – Königium) und die erweiterte (mit den Stichwörtern Samuel – Lade – Philister). Das Meiste daraus ist im bisher Referierten vorbereitet; hier seien nur kurz einige weitere literarkritische Entscheidungen genannt: 1Sam 10,17-27 ist ein deuteronomistischer „Einschub“; 1Samuel 11 wurde erst nachträglich ‚israelisiert‘; die Philister als Feind Israels sind ein Phänomen frühestens der Assyrerzeit, nicht älter sei somit die Erzählung vom Philisterkrieg in Kap. 13–14 (in der Grundfassung); sie wurde nachträglich noch einer „Hebräer-Bearbeitung“ und einer „Gotteskriegsbearbeitung“ unterzogen; auch das Metallmonopol der Philister in 13,19-22 sei zugesetzt — ebenso wie die Verwerfung Sauls durch Samuel in 13,8-15aa, der Motivzug vom Speiseverbot in 14,24-30. 36-45 und der Passus vom Schlachten der Beutetiere in 14,32-35. Insgesamt weist 1Samuel 13–14 acht Schichten auf.

Bemerkenswert ist noch, was Bezzel *nicht* intensiv untersucht, sondern höchstens bei Wege streift: außer der Erzählung von Saul bei der Totenbeschwölerin von En-Dor — sie wird in einer Nebenbemerkung für „deuteronomistisch“ erklärt (230) — sämtliche Geschichten, in denen Saul oder Mitglieder seiner Familie mit David verbunden sind: also die großen Textbereiche 1Samuel 17–26 und 2Samuel 1,17-27; 2–4. In dieser Hinsicht verspricht der Gesamttitel „Saul“ zu viel und bringt auch der Untertitel „Tradition und Redaktion“ keine volle Aufklärung.

Summa summarum liegt hier eine ausnehmend gründliche und kluge Untersuchung zum ersten König Israels, richtiger: zu der von ihm ausgehenden literarischen Tradition vor. Ob der anspruchsvollen Vorgehensweise ist es lobenswert, dass der Autor zwischendurch und am Schluss immer wieder Zusammenfassungen bietet. Wer nur sie liest, erspart sich zwar einige Mühe, bringt sich aber auch um einigen Genuss: einen schönen, klaren, manchmal sogar witzigen Stil, korrekte Referate wichtiger Forschungspositionen (auch abweichender, und zwar ohne jede Ausfälligkeiten!) und einen höchst konzisen Argumentationsweg. Die im Vorangehenden eingestreuten Vorbehalte und kritischen Einwände sollen und wollen den positiven Gesamteindruck nicht überdecken.



Song-Mi Suzie PARK, *Hezekiah and the Dialogue of Memory*. Minneapolis, MN, Fortress Press, 2015. xii-318 p. 15 × 23. £38.99

The recent monograph by Song-Mi Suzie Park (a reworking of her 2010 Harvard dissertation) examines the Hezekiah narratives in the Bible with a view to their redactional history. Park's thesis is that the various Hezekiah narratives were the result of a series of "responses and counter-responses" wherein editors reinterpreted, adapted and supplemented the previous narratives due to their dissatisfaction with "the theology and ideas perpetuated" therein (15). Park's methodological approach is redaction-critical (8) but she describes her method in terms of a new literary approach, quoting Robert Alter (9). Thus, in Park's approach, new literary criticism becomes the method of redactional analysis. While the use of redaction and new literary criticism in one study is not new (e.g., P. S. Evans, *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings. A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19* [VTS 125; Leiden 2009] — a work Park seems unaware of despite its being published years before her study) Park conflates the two methods.

Park does not offer new source-critical delineations for the Hezekiah narratives, but assumes the conclusions of previous scholarship. Instead, Park's contribution is to be found in her redactional ordering of the sources behind the Hezekiah narratives and her hypotheses as to what led to each stage of redaction. Park's redactional order of the sources are as follows: 2 Kgs 18,1-12, 2 Kgs 18,17 – 19,9a, 36–37; 2 Kgs 18,13-16; 2 Kings 20, 2 Kgs 19,9b-35, Isaiah 36–39, 2 Chronicles 32.

Park suggests the earliest source of the Hezekiah narrative in Kings is the Introduction (2 Kgs 18,1-12) since it is "the first passage that the reader encounters when they begin the story" and thus, the "obvious place to start" (20). She supports her position further in how the Introduction looks back to the fall of Samaria and also looks forward to story of the Assyrian attack. (Against Park's view these narrative ties between the Introduction and the surrounding narratives could suggest it was a *later* redactional placement rather than the *earliest* source.)

Park argues that the Introduction required a redactional response because it does not answer the question of whether Jerusalem would suffer the same fate as Samaria. Park maintains that although the Introduction notes Hezekiah's cultic reform, the people of Judah, like those in Samaria, had clearly failed cultically, as implied with the worship at the high places and of the Nehushtan (18,4), leaving open the question of whether the people's impiety would result in the destruction of Jerusalem in a way analogous to that of Samaria (29).

In Park's view, due to this unanswered question, the story of the Assyrian attack was added. Park assumes the Stade-Childs hypothesis that finds three discrete sources in the story of the Assyrian invasion and labels them Source A (2 Kgs 18,13-16), Source B1 (2 Kgs 18,17 – 19,9a, 36–37), and Source B2 (2 Kgs 19,9b-35). Park then speculates as to *which* story of Sennacherib's invasion was *first* redactionally added to the Introduction. Against the majority opinion, Park determines the earliest part of the story of Sennacherib's invasion was not Source A but Source B1 (18,17 – 19,9a, 36–37) since the latter narratively responds to the "unresolved issues" in the Introduction, while the former does not (31).



Park sees B1 answering the Introduction in drawing on the Introduction's themes of trust and reform (2 Kgs 18,4-5). In B1 the Rabshakeh questions whom the Judahites trust (2 Kgs 18,19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30) suggesting that Hezekiah's cultic reforms actually offend their God (18,22). Park suggests that because these criticisms are put "into the mouth of the Rabshakeh [...]" the criticism is presumed to be wrong" (38). Thus, Park sees B1 answering the question that was left open in the Introduction: Jerusalem would not suffer the same fate as Samaria. I find Park's view unconvincing. The Introduction clearly contrasts Hezekiah's reforms with the lack of reform in the North and is therefore optimistic about Jerusalem's future. Furthermore, rather than reassurance the Rabshakeh's voice in B1 offers tension by suggesting Jerusalem would follow suit with Samaria and fall to Assyria (though the tension is resolved in the conclusion).

Regardless, Park suggests that the Rabshakeh's criticisms in B1 necessitated a further redactional response because B1 "conveys its own doubts and questions" (39). Park suggests the responses in the story to the Rabshakeh's criticisms, by both Hezekiah and his emissaries, were not satisfactory and that the Rabshakeh's critiques of Judah's theology evince that Judah was wrestling and struggling with its theology, which led to the further redactional supplementation of Source B2 to resolve the tensions in Source B1. Of course, given that Park suggested the arguments of Rabshakeh were nullified due to him being Israel's enemy, it is not clear how they now function as genuine Judean critique.

Park goes on to examine Source A (18,13-16) which she suggests was subsequently added to Source B1. Park views the insertion of Source A as a redactional attempt by Josianic editors to show that Josiah was superior to Hezekiah. Furthermore, Park suggests that the insertion of Source A necessitated further redactional responses — the story of Hezekiah's illness (2 Kgs 20,1-11). In Park's view, this story answered the doubts raised by Hezekiah's capitulation to Sennacherib in Source A by showing that God will heal a Davidide king [...] because of his piety" (99). Park then suggests the next redactional stage — the story of the Babylonian envoys (2 Kgs 20,12-19) — is a response to the Illness Story. Park suggests the Illness story, which narrated Hezekiah's fifteen-year extension of life, gave rise to the question "What happens after fifteen years? [...] does the pious behavior of a Davidide king guarantee salvation [...] only for a limited time?" The Babylonian envoys story answers that question by affirming that "the guarantee of protection is limited" (117).

Park then examines the final redactional stage of the Hezekiah complex in Kings — Source B2 — which, in Park's view, answers the questions left open by B1 (e.g., insufficient response to the Rabshakeh's rhetoric). While the addition of Source A undermined Hezekiah in favor of Josiah, the addition of Source B2 responded to the problem of Josiah's eventual failure (131). The deliverance of Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day showed that God could do the same for the postexilic community and functioned to provide hope.

Park then examines Isaiah 36–39, as the next redactional stage. Park's conclusions regarding the function of the Hezekiah complex in Isaiah follows fairly standard lines, suggesting they form a bridge between First and Second Isaiah. Park suggests that just as the trajectory of the book of Isaiah moves from judgment prophecies to salvation oracles, so Hezekiah's stories in Isaiah have all been redacted to have a structure that moves from threat to salvation. The Isaian redactor also emphasizes Hezekiah's symbolic value as Zion by depersonalizing

Hezekiah in the Illness story (167). As Hezekiah is delivered from the enemy, healed from sickness etc., so Zion is shown to progress “from death to life” (187).

Park suggests the reason the Isaian redactor appropriated the Hezekiah complex was that he was disturbed by the “unsatisfactory conclusion” of the Hezekiah complex in Kings. The Isaian redactor, therefore, reformed the story making all three Hezekiah stories conclude with restoration (196). While an interesting suggestion, this is not convincing. Why should the Isaian redactor take it upon himself to provide satisfactory conclusions to other biblical stories? Many other candidates exist (e.g., Josiah’s story) yet the Isaian redactor doesn’t touch them. A simpler explanation would seem to be that the writer found the material useful to his purposes in Isaiah, not that he was disturbed by the unsatisfactory conclusion in Kings.

Park finally examines the last redactional stage — Hezekiah in the book of Chronicles. In keeping with her thesis of each redaction answering questions of previous redactions, Park suggests that the Chronicler, by emphasizing the connection of Hezekiah’s reform with the subsequent deliverance of Jerusalem Chronicles definitively answers “once and for all” (217) the criticisms of the Rabshakeh back in B1 that suggested Yahweh was displeased with the reform.

Regarding Chronicles’ version of the Illness and Babylonian envoys stories, Park suggests the stories are conflated in 2 Chr 32,24-26 and (in keeping with her thesis) suggests the Chronicler sets out to explain why the righteous Hezekiah got sick — something not adequately explained in Kings. The Chronicler’s answer is that Hezekiah’s illness was due to his poor response to the “benefit” he received from God (2 Chr 32,25). The benefit referenced here, says Park, was “riches” acquired in his victory over Assyria (229). This is a novel suggestion but the sequence of the text in Chronicles suggests the “benefit” received was his healing from sickness (2 Chr 32,24-25). Cognizant of this, Park suggests that the Chronicler “deliberately obfuscated” the illness story so that Hezekiah’s pride in his riches could be inferred to be the cause of his sickness (227). This line of reasoning seems unlikely to me, though it is a creative approach.

Regarding the Chronicler’s Babylonian envoys story, Park suggests it answered the question of why Hezekiah is blamed for the exile. In Chronicles, the Babylonian envoys’ visit is a “test” (2 Chr 32,31) which Hezekiah passed. Park sees the Chronicler implying that Hezekiah passed the test through the reference above to the Illness story that stated Hezekiah humbled himself (2 Chr 32,26). Again, this is a creative suggestion but seems unlikely in the text. The reference to the Babylonian envoys story in Chronicles is in v. 31 while the reference to Hezekiah humbling himself is in v. 25. It is unclear why the reader should go back to v. 25 to see if Hezekiah passed the test outlined in v. 31.

In sum, Park’s work contains many creative and innovative readings in support her thesis. Even if one is not convinced by her redactional analysis, the book has much to contribute in its sustained focus on how the different Hezekiah narratives can be read in light of each other. While I was not convinced of her thesis, reading the monograph brings a renewed appreciation for the different ways in which Hezekiah’s story is portrayed in different biblical traditions.

Christine ABART, *Lebensfreude und Gottesjubiläum*. Studien zu physisch erlebter Freude in den Psalmen (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 142). Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2015. xiii-350 p. 15,5 × 20,5.

Il presente lavoro costituisce la versione rielaborata della tesi dottorale condotta sotto la direzione della prof.ssa Renate Egger-Wenzel e difesa dall'autrice nel 2013 all'Università di Salisburgo. Il tema della ricerca scaturisce dall'incontro di due principali ambiti di studio: quello sulle emozioni e quello sulla corporeità nella bibbia ebraica.

Circa il primo ambito, l'autrice nota, in un brevissimo *status quaestionis*, una certa carenza di studi sulle "emozioni positive" nella bibbia, in particolare sulla gioia, elemento particolarmente rilevante, in modo particolare, nel Salterio. Circa la corporeità, invece, la Abart sviluppa un filone già aperto, in particolare, dagli studi sulla corporeità nel Salterio di Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher. La correlazione dei due ambiti ha lo scopo di ottenere "Schlüsse für den Einsatz bestimmter hebräischer Begriffe der Freude und der Wahl ihres physischen Ausdrucks" (20). Poiché l'autrice dichiara di limitare la sua ricerca sui passaggi che parlano della gioia e del corpo dell'uomo e non su quelli in cui tali ambiti semantici vengono applicati a Dio, il suo lavoro si può intendere come una ricerca lessicografica focalizzata su uno specifico aspetto di antropologia biblica — quello, per l'appunto, delle emozioni e della loro espressione corporea.

L'opera è fondamentalmente suddivisa in tre parti principali: un'introduzione in cui si forniscono le coordinate fondamentali della ricerca; il "corpo centrale" in cui viene svolta l'analisi dei lessemi della gioia in alcuni passaggi del Salterio; le conclusioni generali. All'interno della parte centrale si trovano undici brevi *excursus* in cui l'autrice illustra alcuni problemi legati a scelte di traduzione o di comprensione di alcune espressioni o lessemi: "[i]n Exkursen werden vor allem die mit Freude vorkommenden physischen Begriffe erläutert" (20). Allo stesso tempo, per illustrare meglio un lessema o un passaggio, l'autrice correda la sua analisi con 36 immagini, per lo più riprese da O. Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament. Am Beispiel der Psalmen* (Göttingen<sup>5</sup>1996), seguendo in questo l'esempio di alcuni commentari recenti sui salmi di lingua tedesca, in particolare quello di F.-L. Hossfeld ed E. Zenger.

Nell'introduzione, come già accennato, l'autrice evidenzia una certa carenza di attenzione da parte della ricerca al tema della "gioia", contestualizzata, in particolare, nel Salterio e dichiara di rivolgere la sua attenzione a questo oggetto di studio, selezionando, però, solo quei passaggi dei salmi in cui tale tema è posto in esplicita relazione con il corpo umano. Per fondare tale scelta e per identificare con precisione il materiale di studio, l'autrice inizialmente si focalizza sull'emozione in generale, rifacendosi soprattutto a recenti studi di psicologia. All'interno della nota difficoltà di definire esattamente cosa sia un'emozione, la Abart evidenzia soprattutto questi elementi: l'emozione (*Emotion*), distinta dallo "stato d'animo" (*Stimmung*) e dal "sentimento" (*Gefühl*), è uno stato (*Zustand*) più o meno intenso e durevole rivolto ad un oggetto, improvviso e capace di determinare il pensiero e il comportamento e, in modo particolare, di coinvolgere il corpo. Le emozioni sono transculturali ma la loro espressione è, in parte, condizionata culturalmente.

Nel vasto campo delle emozioni, la gioia è collegata alla fiducia in sé ed è costruttrice di relazioni sociali. In particolare, a questo proposito si può parlare di “gioia” da due punti di vista: una gioia puntuale, causata da un avvenimento specifico (*fortuna*/εὐτυχία) ed una durevole, come condizione di fondo (*beatitudo*, *felicitas*/εὐδαιμονία). In entrambi i casi, la gioia si genera da una esperienza intensa (*Höhepunkterlebnis*) e tende a costituirsi in uno stato durevole quanto più viene sperimentata. La gioia è collegata, in modo particolare, al viso e alla voce.

Da questo punto di vista, la gioia influenza in modo particolare l'espressione verbale, la scelta delle parole, la grammatica e l'intonazione. Questo è il motivo per cui “[d]ie Untersuchung lexikalischer Formen [...] ist nicht die einzige, aber eine sehr wichtige Möglichkeit, um Emotionen sprach- und kulturübergreifend zu erforschen” (11). L'espressione verbale delle emozioni si può ben evidenziare, secondo l'autrice, grazie all'analisi degli atti linguistici, in particolare all'interno del discorso diretto, categoria quest'ultima che comprende anche i salmi. In questo modo, l'autrice offre un'ulteriore ragione per motivare la scelta del metodo (analisi lessicografica) e dell'ambito di ricerca (Salterio).

L'autrice richiama, a questo punto, lo stretto nesso tra emozioni e corporeità presente nell'antropologia biblica e la rilevanza numerica dei lessemi collegati alla gioia e al corpo nel Salterio. Per circoscrivere in modo adeguato all'interno di questo materiale l'oggetto della sua analisi, la Abart si concentra su sei “Wortfelder”: שמח (“sich freuen”); רגן (“jubeln”); גיל (“jauchzen”), שוש (“froh sein”); עלו (“frohlocken”); שעשע (“erquicken”). I passi che pongono in relazione la gioia al corpo sono — con l'esclusione di quelli in cui si parla di cantare, battere le mani, suonare — secondo l'autrice questi: שמח (Sal 4,2-9; 16,1b-11; 19,8-11; 33,18-22; 86,1b-7; 97,10-12; 104,10-18; 105,1-6); רגן (Sal 32,6-11; 42,2-6; 47,2-6; 51,12-21; 63,2-6; 71,17-24; 84,2-5; 118,10-16; 126,1b-6); גיל (Sal 13,2-6; 16,1b-11; 35,9-10; 51,3-11); שוש (Sal 35,9-10; 119,109-112); עלו (Sal 28,1b-9).

Nella parte centrale l'autrice esamina ognuno dei passaggi summenzionati, dedicando un paragrafo ad ognuno dei sei lessemi. Il modo di esposizione è piuttosto regolare e sistematico. Innanzitutto, viene offerta una presentazione generale complessiva della radice — desunta, per lo più, dai dizionari teologici —, che comprende soprattutto alcuni dati statistici sulle occorrenze divise per morfologia, soggetto, uso nominale o verbale. Vengono tenuti in conto i lessemi che ricorrono più frequentemente in parallelo e si tenta, alla luce di questi dati, una prima determinazione semantica della radice stessa. A questo punto, l'analisi si concentra sulle occorrenze in cui, a giudizio dell'autrice, gioia e corporeità vengono tra loro correlate. Anche in questo caso, l'ordine dell'esposizione è piuttosto regolare: lasciando da parte le questioni redazionali e di genere letterario, l'autrice offre innanzitutto una breve introduzione al tema centrale del salmo considerato, una traduzione del testo, corredata, nelle note, dalle osservazioni di critica testuale, un'analisi della struttura e un commento delle principali parti in cui il salmo stesso si compone, concentrandosi, nei testi più lunghi, solo sul contesto immediato del versetto in cui, per l'appunto, gioia e corporeità vengono affiancate. Prima delle conclusioni, corredate da un'utile tabella riassuntiva, l'autrice dedica alcune veloci osservazioni, piuttosto descrittive, alla traduzione greca del lessema considerato.

Questa è senz'altro la parte più stimolante del lavoro, nella quale vengono discussi molti punti particolari e offerti un numero non trascurabile di spunti ed osservazioni che, in questa sede, non possono essere discussi nel dettaglio. Ci

limitiamo, pertanto, ad evidenziare alcuni dei risultanti più rilevanti scaturiti dalla ricerca dell'autrice.

La radice שמח indica prevalentemente la gioia come condizione (*Grundstimmung*), come indicano i frequenti paralleli con l'organo del cuore. Tale gioia scaturisce dall'azione benefica e salvifica del Signore, o dal ricordo di essa, sia verso un singolo che verso la comunità. רנן indica, per contro, la gioia che esprime nel grido o in un'espressione vocale, come indicano i paralleli con gli organi di fonazione (gola, voce, lingua, labbra). A differenza di שמח, che indica piuttosto uno stato, questo lessema indica una gioia spontanea, espressa vocalmente, al punto che emozione ed espressione vengono praticamente a coincidere. Tale spontaneità ha la tendenza a diventare una *Grundstimmung*, come indicano il parallelo con il "cuore" (Sal 32,11) e l'uso del sostantivo רִנָּה. Il motivo della gioia è, di fatto, lo stesso di שמח: l'agire di Dio che si concretizza in modi diversi. Anche גיל indica un "grido di gioia", in cui l'emozione interiore si coniuga all'espressione esteriore. Rispetto a רנן, le due dimensioni, interiore ed esteriore, sembrano distinte più chiaramente: così גיל viene collegato sia al cuore, al fegato e alle ossa che alla voce. Il lessema indica, comunque, sempre una gioia spontanea. שוש sembra più simile a שמח ma meno facile da determinare. L'autrice, in ogni caso, rileva per questo lessema il significato di gioia durevole, riflessa, forse anche espressa esteriormente (cf. Sal 35,9.10: gola e ossa). עלז indica una gioia spontanea, collegata al cuore nell'unico passo considerato dall'autrice (Sal 28,7). שׂעשׂע, infine, è collegato alla gola (נֶפֶשׁ) in Sal 94,19, ed indica una gioia spontanea, forse espressa in modo sonoro.

Dall'analisi fin qui condotta, basandosi anche su considerazioni di carattere morfologico, l'autrice trae, infine, alcune conclusioni. Nei brani considerati, la gioia appare un'emozione capace di muovere gli uomini (324), una realtà che dipende dall'iniziativa di chi è implicato o è data da Dio, capace di essere sia spontanea che durevole, in modo tale, comunque, che la prima introduce e rafforza la seconda. In particolare, tale gioia scaturisce dall'azione salvifica di Dio, che risolve una situazione di pericolo: è perciò un dono o una "reazione" a tale salvezza, reazione che può essere prima immediata e poi riflessa oppure scaturire direttamente da una riflessione sull'agire di Dio. Gli organi maggiormente correlati alla gioia sono il cuore e poi quelli di fonazione (gola, voce, lingua, labbra): tale emozione è, quindi, generata all'interno ma anche comunicata ed espressa all'esterno. La prevalenza nella scelta di questi organi del corpo conferma il fatto che la gioia è, allo stesso tempo, un atto spontaneo, immediato così come una *Grundstimmung*.

L'opera della Abart appare molto articolata e ricca di intuizioni, spunti e osservazioni stimolanti. Alcuni aspetti del lavoro, però, prestano il fianco, a nostro avviso, ad alcuni rilievi. La scelta di concentrare l'analisi solo su quei passaggi in cui gioia e sua espressione corporea sono correlate, permette di avere solo un'immagine parziale del tema nel Salterio e, perciò, di rendere ancora relativamente precarie le conclusioni dell'autrice. Sarebbe stato interessante collocare i passaggi in cui gioia e corporeità si coniugano all'interno dell'intero campo semantico del lessema considerato. L'autrice offre solo un accenno, in questo senso, in apertura dei rispettivi paragrafi, riassumendo, per lo più, ricerche precedenti. Allo stesso tempo, alcuni passaggi dell'opera appaiono a volte un po' "meccanici", ad esempio, nel dedurre immediatamente le sfumature semantiche di un determinato lessema dalla sua morfologia (ad esempio, la forma nominale indica *sempre* uno

“stato” e non un’“azione”: cf. 250 a proposito di רָנָה). Ugualmente, un po’ forzata appare in alcuni passaggi la traduzione di certi lessemi, quale, ad esempio, quella di גִּלָּה con “gola” (l’autrice spiega questa scelta nell’*excursus* 4, 87-89): tale traduzione non sembra adatta in tutti i contesti e l’autrice stessa sembra rendersene conto (cf. ad esempio 292 su Sal 119,109a). Ad un livello inferiore sono da segnalare alcuni problemi tipografici per i caratteri ebraici (17-18) che rendono disagiata seguire il ragionamento dell’autrice.

Queste osservazioni non diminuiscono, però, il valore dell’opera della Abart che costituisce un contributo stimolante su un campo di ricerca ancora relativamente inesplorato, tanto più necessario vista la considerevole presenza dei “lessemi della gioia” nel Salterio e la scarsità di studi ad essa dedicati. Uno dei meriti del presente lavoro è, perciò, senz’altro quello di richiamare l’attenzione su un aspetto non secondario della semantica dei salmi e di porre le basi per future, ulteriori ricerche in questo senso.

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CHEUNG, Simon Chi-Chung, *Wisdom Intoned. A Reappraisal of the Genre ‘Wisdom Psalms’* (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, 613). London – New Dehli, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. xvi-228 p.

Currently, Simon Chi-Chung Cheung is Assistant Professor of Old Testament at the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong. “Psalmic wisdom is not a biblical topic that can be celebrated for its capacity to attract compelling scholarly consensus”. That’s the opening sentence of his first chapter, “Classifying ‘Wisdom Psalms’”. He cites this observation from my article, “Wisdom Psalms and the Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter”, *For A Later Generation* (eds. R.A. Argall – B.A. Bow – R.A. Werline) (Harrisburg, PA 2000) 144-160. Here my intention is not to parade my contribution to wisdom psalms studies, but to disclose that Cheung incorporates the reflections of a vast company of scholars.

In his first chapter these include H. Gunkel, S. Mowinckel, R.E. Murphy, J.L. Crenshaw, and his dissertation supervisor, K.J. Dell. He is impressed by Murphy’s claim that in biblical wisdom texts form and life setting “are only loosely associated” (15). The following convoluted sentence concludes his initial chapter: “I will maintain as my working hypothesis that the family of ‘wisdom psalms’ includes psalms of graded degrees of membership and is identifiable by a wisdom-oriented constellation of its generic elements, made manifest in several salient features which are appropriate to its communication goal” (21). That statement demands some rereading.

In Chapter 2 Cheung avers that biblical wisdom literature yields three prominent features: “a contextual focus on wisdom-related themes, a tone which is reflective of intellectualism, and a didactic intention” (28). Though a wisdom psalm is likely to incorporate non-wisdom themes, “wisdom themes will be demonstrably more significant” (29). Regarding an intellectual tone, the author notes that it is a matter of “creating knowledge through human rationality” (31) that is intent on persuasion.



Whereas “didactic intention” is unlikely to be self-evident, Cheung submits that it is best understood by means of speech-act theory that emphasizes the “performative nature of speaking” (40).

Subsequent chapters target specific psalms. Entitled, “Psalm 37: The ABCs of Living in the Land”, Chapter 3 focuses on Psalm 37, often understood as a wisdom composition. A fully annotated translation prefaces Cheung’s careful analysis in which he recognizes that this lengthy acrostic poem swarms with “contrastive eventualities” involving “wealthy evil-doers” and “dispirited righteous” persons (58-59). He aptly holds that the psalmist is concerned about economic power — a prominent theme in biblical wisdom literature. He adds that a wisdom thrust, an intellectual tone, and a didactic intention make this “a prototypical wisdom psalm” (71-76).

Chapter 4 is entitled “Psalm 49: The Riddle of Death”. The author discerns that for the psalmist “death is unavoidable” and is “the ultimate equalizer” since it “cancels out all socio-economic stratification” (84). Cheung insightfully observes that the psalmist presents himself as “an exemplary student who listens attentively to words of wisdom” and is keen to learn “what or whom to trust” (91-92). Moreover, he notes that the psalmist quietly affirms “a post-mortem communion with God” (92-94). This observation meshes with my own take on Psalm 49 that the poet avers that despite his having suffered persecution, he is hopeful about his own immortality and eternal fellowship with God (J.K. Kuntz, “The Retribution Motif in Psalmic Wisdom”, *ZAW* 89 [1977] 232).

Chapter 5 bears the title “Psalm 73: Crossing the Boundary”. Cheung observes that early on in this composition, the wisdom poet confesses his anguish over the fact that the wicked enjoy good fortune yet he (who believes himself to be righteous) is plagued by affliction. The psalmist, however, realizes that the wicked will meet their doom (110).

That said, Cheung’s understanding of Ps 73,23-24 is only somewhat convincing. His translation reads: “But I am always with you; / you grasp me by my right hand, // with your counsel you lead me, / and you take me behind glory”. Rather than understanding this text as voicing the poet’s hope in “a post-mortem communion with God”, Cheng submits that the poet is primarily focused on the deity’s “uninterrupted guidance” (111). Some commentators submit that Ps 73, 23-24 yields an “intimation of immortality”. Other commentators, however, doubt that this is the case. Clearly, this debate is not easily resolved. Finally, Cheung explains that Psalm 73 is not mainly didactic, since its plausible inclination is to address certain hearers/readers.

Cheung might also have focused on the placement of Psalm 73 in the Psalter. Situated at roughly the midpoint within the completed collection of canonical psalms, Psalm 73 looks backward to Psalm 1 and subsequent psalms that reflect on woeful human existence, and it looks forward to Psalm 150 and other poems situated after Psalm 73 that celebrate God’s assuring presence (Kuntz, “Wisdom Psalms and the Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter”, 158).

Entitled “Wisdom in the Fringe (I): Two Cultic Psalms”, Chapter 6 offers Cheung’s interpretation of Psalms 128 and 32. The opening line of Psalm 128, “Happy is everyone who fears Yahweh”, is a prominent motif in biblical wisdom psalms. Additionally, the author refers to two other wisdom motifs — “‘blessings’ and individualization of rewards” (137). Those blessings include pleasure in one’s work and an enviable family life. In my opinion, these blessings are

taken as evidence of the deity's gracious dealings in Israel's behalf. That said, Cheung avers that the tone of Psalm 128 is "more benedictory than intellectual" (137).

In his discussion of Psalm 32, he observes that Gunkel designated this poem as an individual thanksgiving that was influenced by wisdom poetry. Cheung submits that Psalm 32 "lies at the very periphery of the 'wisdom psalm' family" (138), while manifesting characteristics of a song of thanksgiving. In fact, he argues that whereas the two categories have some features in common, Psalm 32 more closely resembles a thanksgiving song than it does a wisdom psalm.

Chapter 7 yields the title "'Wisdom' in the Fringe (II): A Joban and a Torah Psalm". Cheung spotlights Psalms 39 and 19 which are not easily construed as wisdom psalms. He submits that Psalm 39 yields several wisdom features, including the brevity of human existence and the futility of human effort (prominently asserted by Qoheleth). The psalmist's zealous petition for God's mercy are reminiscent of both Qoheleth and Job. Even so, Cheung holds that based on a speech-act analysis, this psalm more closely resembles a "'prayer for help' than a didactic poem" (161). In sum, Psalm 39 cannot be "straitjacketed into any one kind of psalm genre" (163).

With regard to Psalm 19, Cheung sides with those scholars who claim that this poem is a unified composition. He notes that only in v. 11 are "verbal echoes of wisdom" evident (167). Admittedly, order in creation, a prominent motif in Psalm 19, was a concern of Israelite sages. Moreover, Cheung avers that what is distinctive in this psalm is its prayer for help. That said, "the most decisive wisdom feature of this psalm is its intellectual tone" (176).

Throughout this study when Cheung disagrees with a scholar (including this reviewer), he explains why in a measured language that is never hostile. He cites some memorable assertions from scholars who have tarried with wisdom psalms. For example, he calls attention to Norman Whybray who in his piece in the John Emerton *Festschrift* ("Wisdom Psalms", *Wisdom in Ancient Israel* [eds. J. Day – R.P. Gordon – H.G.M. Williamson] [Cambridge 1995] 152-160) admitted that writing about Wisdom psalms is "somewhat akin to making bricks without straw" since scholars disagree on the number, identity, and even the existence of wisdom psalms. In Cheung's brief concluding chapter he aptly summarizes his findings. At times his prose might have been more succinct. For example, as he opens one section he writes, "A majority of scholars is more disposed to examine each psalm with respect to its content and form [...]" (9). He might have written, "Most scholars prefer to examine each psalm [...]" Since that shortens his sentence by only four words, one might retort, "What's the fuss?" The author correctly identifies Psalm 37 as an alphabetical acrostic, thus suggesting that what is written as been "thoroughly deliberated" (73). He might have added that many scholars hold that one purpose of an alphabetical acrostic poem is to facilitate memorization (e.g., what comes after 'A' is 'B'). That said, for one whose native language is not English, Cheung's prose is almost always lucid, thanks to his own capacity to write clear English and to several colleagues who have made suggestions when his language was less than felicitous. Clearly, Cheung has given us an insightful book that, with rare exception, is well-written and convincing.



### Novum Testamentum

Kristian A. BENDORAITIS, *'Behold, the Angels Came and Served Him'. A Compositional Analysis of Angels in Matthew* (Library of New Testament Studies 523). London – New Delhi, Bloomsbury, T&T Clark 2015. xvii-243 p. 16 × 24. £10.50

This book is a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation submitted to Durham University in 2011. Systematically studying all the references to angels in Matthew's gospel Bendoraitis investigates the narrative function of the presentation of angels in the gospel. More specifically, this study focuses on the question how angel traditions shape Matthew's portrayal of Jesus and discipleship. The gospel's "demonstrated interest in angels, its Jewish character, and its reflection of apocalyptic language and motifs" (13) are given as the basic reasons for Bendoraitis choosing the gospel of Matthew for this study.

Organized in 11 chapters, the work explores various aspects of the angel tradition and its use in Matthew, and arrives at three conclusions. It argues that Matthew has intentionally used angel traditions to portray Jesus as "an authoritative eschatological judge", and to show that "God is at work in the life of Jesus!". The study also suggests that the use of angels in the gospel "contributes to the heavenly character of Matthew's apocalyptic worldview".

Besides introducing the thesis, method and outline of the book, the first chapter offers an extensive survey of the history of New Testament research on angels. Critically surveying the arguments of about thirty authors (from 1925 to 2008) on questions regarding angels, angelology and angel Christology in the early church, Bendoraitis highlights the important contributions of biblical scholars and their widespread interest in the subject. In this thesis he goes further carrying out a detailed inquiry into the significance of the presence of angels in a particular gospel, which he spots as a lacuna in research. Angels are referred to in nineteen verses in the gospel of Matthew (six times in the singular and thirteen times in the plural). Chapters two to ten of Bendoraitis's study, which scrutinize all these texts and their context are arranged in a regular pattern, consisting of an introduction, a brief discussion on the probable angel tradition behind the text, a detailed exegetical and theological analysis and a conclusion. The eleventh chapter summarizes the findings and offers a brief reflection on Matthean "Apocalypticism" and "Angelomorphic Christology".

Though various commentaries on the gospel of Matthew have made important observations and reflections regarding the appearance of angels in different passages in the gospel, no one has so far attempted to study these texts together and interpret them in the light of Matthean Christology and Eschatology. Hence Bendoraitis's study makes a valuable contribution to Matthean research, especially to its angelological investigations.

As the subtitle of the book indicates, Bendoraitis carries out a *compositional analysis* of the text employing both redaction criticism and narrative criticism. This combined approach of two different methods helps the author both to delve deeply into the angelology of the time, especially of the Second Temple literature, that might have influenced the composition of the text, and to explore the narrative

function of angels in the gospel. However, while Bendoraitis uses redaction criticism extensively in his work, his use of narrative criticism is minimal.

By studying the presentation of the angels in the infancy narrative, temptation episode, passion narrative and the resurrection account (chapters 2,3,9,10) Bendoraitis establishes his second proposition that Matthew uses the angel tradition to demonstrate God's active involvement in Jesus' life and mission. Most of the ideas that the author discusses in these chapters can be found, though not in detail, in different commentaries. Nevertheless, his use of various angel tradition from the OT and Second Temple period literature to interpret these texts helps readers to look at these texts from fresh perspectives.

Bendoraitis amply demonstrates how the passages that show the involvement of angels in the judgement (analysed in chapters 4,5,8) reflect Matthew's use of angel traditions to portray the Son of Man as the authoritative eschatological judge (Bendoraitis's first proposition). As the author observes, the sayings regarding the Son of Man are found in three separate groups in Matthew: in Jesus' present ministry, in his suffering and in his future coming. Angels accompany the Son of Man only in the texts which refer to his future coming. The author's suggestion for interpreting Matthew's view of discipleship in the light of this angel tradition in the judgement scenes is intriguing. At the same time, such an interpretation has its limits too. It is true that Matthew presents discipleship as a journey that finds its fulfilment in the eschatological entry into the kingdom. Nevertheless it is also presented as a way of life that is deeply rooted in the present (see Matt 7,21-23). This 'here and now' aspect of discipleship, which Matthew emphasizes in different ways in the gospel, may vanish into thin air if it is viewed only from an eschatological perspective. Similarly, it is important to consider the fact that the disciples are related to the Son of Man and not to the angels who accompany him. Matthew does not attribute any special power to the angels, except that they accompany the Son of Man and execute his orders. Even if the presence of angels with the Son of Man is removed from the judgement scenes, it may not affect Matthew's view of disciples and discipleship. Bendoraitis's affirmation in his final conclusion, "For Matthew, Jesus' disciples need not fear the activity of the angels at the final judgement, for the one that sits upon the throne is the same earthly Jesus with whom they are familiar" (211), does not concur with Matthew's view of reward and punishment. The disciples' familiarity with Jesus is not a guarantee for them to be exempted from any judgement (see again Matt 7,21-23).

As Bendoraitis admits, not all the references to angels in Matthew fit neatly into the categories that he has proposed. The angels mentioned in 18,10 and 22,30 refer to a different category; they are not linked to the glory and power of the Son of Man, but to human persons and their celestial existence. Bendoraitis's conclusions to the study of these texts (chapters 6 and 7) also reflect this difference. Here the author makes a plain and simple assertion that the presence of angels in 18,10 and 22,30 illustrates how "Matthew's worldview includes the heavenly realm as part of its picture of life on earth" (212). His analysis and interpretation of angel traditions in these chapters too provides the readers with a wealth of information regarding different types of angels (angels of the nations, guardian angels, intercessory angels, angels of the presence etc.) and the use of angelic imageries in the biblical and non-biblical literature.

In brief, Bendoraitis has succeeded well in showing how the “Gospel of Matthew benefits from the inclusion of angel tradition in its presentation of Jesus” (212), but his attempt to link it also to discipleship does not enjoy the same level of success.

On the whole this thesis is written with great care and precision. However, one may notice an occasional slip in the presentation. For example, Michaelis’s name is mentioned three times on pages 17-18, but his work is not cited anywhere in the book, neither in the footnotes nor in the bibliography. Similarly, on page 43 referring to Luke 1,20.63-64, he writes, “he [Zechariah] is not permitted to speak until Jesus’ circumcision” where it should be “John’s circumcision”. The summaries and conclusions that Bendoraitis provides at the end of every section help the reader follow his arguments well, yet on a number of occasions they appear needlessly repetitive. The author is well read in the literature on angel tradition. While he has given a fairly comprehensive bibliography of the English language sources, his use of the sources from other languages is marginal.

“My goal is to fill a gap both in Matthean studies and in research on Christology and angels by tracing the contours of Matthew’s portrayal of the angels in his narrative and identifying the results of its contribution to Matthew’s Christology” (21). This study has certainly attained this goal that the author defines at the end of the first chapter of the book. This work will definitely serve as an excellent starting point for anyone who wishes to engage in serious study of angels in Matthew and in the New Testament.

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Stephen Richard TURLEY, *The Ritualized Revelation of the Messianic Age*. Washings and Meals in Galatians and 1 Corinthians (Library of New Testament Studies 544). London – New Delhi, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015, ix-198 p. 16 × 24. £ 59,75

Lo studio rappresenta la versione rivista di una dissertazione dottorale, condotta all’Università di Durham dal 2007 al 2013 sotto la guida dei docenti John Barclay, Stephen Barton e Charlotte Hardman. Oggi l’autore insegna negli USA e precisamente alla Eastern University in Pennsylvania e alla Tall Oaks Classic School in Delaware. Nel suo lavoro egli intende studiare due riti propri delle comunità paoline, i bagni e i pasti rituali, muovendosi nella prospettiva propria degli studi antropologici sul rito (studi rituali).

Dopo l’indice dei contenuti, le abbreviazioni e la premessa (v-ix), comincia la prima parte del volume (1-26), dedicata alla storia della ricerca propria degli studi rituali, in particolare di quelli applicati alle lettere paoline. Da subito Turley sostiene, con una buona dose di esagerazione, che gli studiosi di Paolo negli ultimi decenni hanno sempre più considerato le pratiche rituali come oggetto primario di ricerca. L’autore insiste poi sull’importanza di una lettura rituale per una coerente interpretazione di diverse problematiche che vengono affrontate negli studi

paolini. Di conseguenza, egli passa a presentare i tre maggiori approcci tendenti a comprendere *il rituale* come tema centrale delle ricerche sul pensiero dell'Apostolo: il primo è centrato sul significato socio-funzionale dei riti, il secondo sul ruolo in essi svolto dal corpo, il terzo sul rituale come pratica sociale. Dopo aver evidenziato i punti di forza e i limiti di ciascuno dei suddetti indirizzi, Turley individua quattro problematiche che richiedono uno sviluppo ulteriore e sulle quali intende appuntare la sua attenzione: il superamento della dicotomia tra i contenuti della fede e il corpo che li rappresenta nel rito, l'importanza del tempo e dello spazio nella ritualità paolina, la relazione tra l'evento battesimale e il tema della partecipazione nello Spirito secondo l'Apostolo, la corrispondenza nel compimento del rito tra le concezioni sacre e cosmiche, da una parte, e la vita sociale ed etica, dall'altra. Così, per poter realizzare il programma di studio, l'autore presenta con chiarezza la sua scelta metodologica. Egli intende seguire la proposta dell'antropologo ecologista americano Roy Rappaport, proposta presentata in *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge, UK 1999), la quale concerne un'analisi delle proprietà formali e delle relazioni costitutive del processo rituale nella sua attuazione e nella sua rappresentazione. In forza di tale prospettiva metodologica, Turley intende analizzare i due principali riti che identificano le comunità paoline, i bagni e i pasti rituali, secondo quanto si dice di loro in Galati e in 1 Corinzi. Si deve notare che il linguaggio di questa prima parte è spesso di difficile comprensione per il lettore che non possiede una formazione antropologica e che è soltanto esperto in ambito biblico. Tuttavia, visto che il libro fa parte di una collana che si chiama *Library of New Testament Studies*, l'autore avrebbe dovuto tenerne molto più conto, inoltre tale mancanza di attenzione ai destinatari si riflette anche in altri passaggi del libro, nei quali Turley continua a muoversi nell'ambito antropologico o ricorre a un periodare inutilmente lungo e complicato (ad es. p. 33 n. 23).

La seconda parte del volume (27-100) riguarda i bagni rituali in Paolo. In particolare, il secondo capitolo (29-58) studia il battesimo in Galati, facendo specifico riferimento al testo di 3,26-29. L'autore evidenzia quelle che ritiene essere le questioni più spinose del brano: la derivazione paolina o pre-paolina della formula battesimale, il rapporto tra la fede e il battesimo nell'ambito dell'*essere in Cristo* dei Galati, la precisa natura delle distinzioni superate in 3,28 e la loro collocazione nell'argomentare paolino. Poi, attraverso il ricorso alla summenzionata teoria rituale, afferma di aver opportunamente risolto le tre questioni. Tuttavia, a nostro parere, le interessanti soluzioni proposte sono estranee alla logica del testo paolino. Ad esempio, il rapporto tra fede e battesimo è spiegato a partire dalla posizione di Rappaport cosicché il rituale del battesimo, che porta con sé una definita demarcazione del tempo, determinerebbe, nel suo stesso svolgersi, una chiarezza al livello pubblico del processo privato e soggettivo della fede. Al contrario, riteniamo che la relazione tra fede e battesimo in 3,26-29 debba essere compresa analizzando l'argomentazione propria del testo, laddove nei vv. 27-29 il battesimo è presentato come una prova di fatto della tesi di 3,26, la quale sottolinea che tutti i credenti, in particolare quelli etnico-cristiani della Galazia, sono figli di Dio in ragione della loro fede in Cristo (cf. F. Bianchini, *Lettera ai Galati* [Nuovo Testamento – commento esegetico e spirituale; Roma 2009] 99-97). Inoltre Turley sostiene che nell'insieme di Galati il battesimo è mostrato da Paolo come un rituale apocalittico che genera un dualismo spazio-temporale nell'ambito del corpo battezzato e che comporta un'orientazione sociale apocalittica. In questo

modo egli lascia del tutto perplesso il lettore che nella lettera trova l'unica referenza al rito cristiano in 3,27, versetto nel quale è possibile intravedere ben poco di tutto quanto il nostro autore afferma.

Il terzo capitolo (59-74) appunta la sua attenzione su battesimo, etica, corpo escatologico in 1 Cor 6,11. Facendo ancora leva sulla stessa teoria rituale, Turley giunge ad affermare che nell'uso del verbo ἀπολούω di 6,11 si indica che il corpo è il luogo per l'identità cristologica e pneumatologica dei Corinzi, laddove il rito del battesimo rivela l'inizio dell'era messianica, spingendo altresì i battezzati ad assumere una vita etica comprendente una purità somatica che pone in relazione con il corpo glorificato del Risorto. Purtroppo siamo costretti a notare che gli elementi del testo paolino non autorizzano l'autore a vedere tutto questo in una sola espressione o in un solo versetto.

Il quarto capitolo (75-98) si sofferma sul battesimo e lo Spirito in 1 Cor 12,13. Turley ben rileva le due problematiche interpretative del testo paolino, individuando le questioni della relazione tra πνεῦμα e βαπτίζω e di quella tra βαπτίζω e ποτίζω. I rapporti tra le tre parole sono visti nella logica, propria della teoria rituale, della predicazione metaforica, la quale sostiene come la partecipazione al rito è l'elemento necessario per l'appropriazione a un soggetto di tale predicazione. Così nei suddetti termini si mostrerebbe complessivamente il dono dello Spirito dei tempi messianici, promesso nel testo di Ez 36,25-27 e accordato al battezzato. Se l'idea risulta, interessante, essa però non appare adeguatamente provata al livello dell'intertestualità. In aggiunta non si capisce perché, volendo affrontare il battesimo in 1 Corinzi, l'autore non abbia in alcun modo preso in considerazione gli altri testi battesimali della lettera come 1,13-17; 10,2; 15,29.

Da ultimo il quinto capitolo presenta le conclusioni riassuntive della seconda parte (99-100).

La terza parte del lavoro (101-175) è dedicata ai pasti rituali paolini. Nel sesto capitolo (103-131), si affrontano due problematiche in merito a quelli antiocheni e al testo di Gal 2,11-21: la prima riguarda le regole alimentari che effettivamente erano seguite ad Antiochia prima del famoso incidente e la seconda concerne il significato di importanti espressioni di 2,16 e della loro relazione con i pasti antiocheni. Seguendo ancora la stessa metodologia, l'autore giunge ad affermare dapprima che i pasti ad Antiochia, in quanto rappresentazione della "verità del vangelo", comportano un completo allontanamento dalle norme alimentari giudaiche, poi che le parole di 2,16 devono essere viste a partire dal meccanismo rituale dell'incarnazione corporale (*embodiment*) volto a rendere percepibile ai sensi una realtà teorica. In definitiva i pasti di Antiochia sarebbero per Paolo una manifestazione visuale dell'incorporazione di tutte le cose nella morte e risurrezione di Cristo. A nostro parere anche qui l'autore non è autorizzato a dedurre tutto questo dal testo paolino, il quale introduce piuttosto l'incidente di Antiochia come un'indicazione che l'accordo siglato a Gerusalemme (2,1-10), con il riconoscimento del vangelo dell'Apostolo, non doveva essere smentito nella prassi concreta delle comunità cristiane. Il settimo capitolo (133-170) tratta della cena del Signore nel contesto della sezione di 1 Cor 8-10. Qui l'autore indica giustamente come il problema maggiore della sezione sia quello di rinvenire la sua coerenza. Egli giunge a sostenere, in base alla sua prospettiva metodologica, che il rituale della Cena del Signore di 10,16-22 e di 11,17-34 rappresenta il fattore di coerenza perché esso fornisce una nuova concezione del tempo, del cosmo e della divina presenza che illumina le questioni della carne immolata agli idoli e dell'idolatria.

Tuttavia, ancora una volta gli elementi decisivi per l'interpretazione sono extra-testuali, inoltre l'autore non dà alcuna importanza al ruolo del capitolo 9, decisivo per intendere la logica della sezione, e infine prende in considerazione un testo come 11,17-34 che di per sé non appartiene alla sezione in esame.

Nell'ottavo capitolo (171-172) abbiamo le conclusioni della terza parte, mentre nel nono (173-175) quelle di tutto il libro.

Il volume possiede con un'ampia bibliografia (176-193), la quale però non sempre è aggiornata (si veda soprattutto in merito a Galati) e comprende, aldilà dei contributi in lingua inglese, soltanto pochi testi in tedesco (meno di una decina). In chiusura troviamo un indice (194-198), dove si mescolano i riferimenti tematici, biblici, agli autori antichi e a quelli moderni.

Oltre ai pregi e ai limiti già notati, dobbiamo anzitutto rimarcare il fatto che noi abbiamo trovato la lettura del libro oltremodo faticosa, non solo a causa del ricorso al linguaggio tecnico dell'antropologia, ma anche per il generale modo di scrivere dell'autore. Tuttavia l'interrogativo più importante riguarda la metodologia con il ricorso a una rituale derivante da Rappaport. Tale opzione non risulta convincente perché troppe volte giunge a spiegare il dettato paolino evidenziando elementi del tutto estranei ad esso, semplicemente perché appaiono coerenti con il quadro globale delineato dalla suddetta teoria. A nostro avviso è un peccato, perché Turley dimostra di essere un uomo erudito e capace di enucleare le problematiche interpretative del testo, cosicché avrebbe fatto meglio a partire da un'attenta esegesi del dettato testuale da ampliare utilmente, ma senza stravolgimenti, con l'ausilio degli studi antropologici sul rito. Infine, dal punto di vista editoriale il volume risulta quasi perfetto (abbiamo trovato solo tre piccoli refusi: p. 118 r. 7; p. 162 n. 157; p. 186 r. 31).

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John M.G. BARCLAY, *Paul & the Gift*. Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, U.K., Eerdmans, 2015. vii-656 p. 16 × 24,6

How is the perfection of grace understood in the Letter to the Galatians and in the Letter to the Romans? That is the main question of this book by John M.G. Barclay (henceforth JB). His answer is formulated in terms of "incongruity": Paul shows that the grace of God is the gift of Christ given to Jews and Gentiles without any consideration of their merit. Through a renewed approach and accurate research, JB resumes the delicate theological debate on *sola gratia*, updating the categories and proposing an interpretation that seeks to harmonize text (Scripture) and context (reception). In the author's own words this interpretation can be considered "*either as a re-contextualization of the Augustinian-Lutheran tradition, returning the dynamic of the incongruity of grace to its original mission environment [...], or as a reconfiguration of the 'new perspective', placing its best historical and exegetical insights within the frame of Paul's theology of grace*" (573).

How, then, does JB show the centrality of this "incongruity"? To understand the author's interpretation we have to grasp the notions of gift and perfection, as

well as the questions he poses about the interpretations of Luther and of Sanders. JB analyzes the anthropological notion of gift and questions the modern Western concept of "perfect gift" (including that of "pure grace"). In this case his starting point is M. Mauss's study ("Essai sur le Don: Forme et Raison de l'Échange dans les sociétés archaïques", *Sociologie et Anthropologie* [Paris 1950] 145-279), which enables him to show that a gift gives rise not only to social relations but also to expectations of return. JB traces the same idea back to the Greco-Roman world (to the Roman system of patronage and to the Greek system of euergetism), as it is attested in some authors (for example Seneca, *De beneficiis*), and he rightly wonders whether the Jews stood completely aloof from this Mediterranean culture of reciprocity. JB replies that in the Jewish tradition forms of benevolence appear over and above the expectation of any return "not because they did not care about the return, but because they had stronger ideological grounds for expecting one [from God]" (45). Following closely J. Parry ("The Gift, the Indian Gift, and the 'Indian Gift'", *Man* 21 [1986] 453-473) JB concludes the first chapter asserting that the "pure" form of gift is an invention of contemporary Western culture.

The anthropological analysis of a gift allows JB to distance himself from the ideological transformations that the notion of a gift has undergone in modern times. In particular, it allows him to see, through a new filter, the Lutheran interpretation of grace. JB shows how Luther responded to the Catholic logic of merit (i.e. performing deeds to gain the divine favor) by stressing the uniqueness of the unmerited gift in Christ. According to JB, this understanding of a free gift leads to a moral ideal based not on retribution but on obligation (Kant). This understanding of gift as undeserved, as a disproportionate favor, constitutes one of the hermeneutical pillars of JB's study. However, unlike Luther, JB shows that the gift of Christ, far from being disinterested, seeks to elicit a fitting ethical response in believers.

The fact that a "perfect gift" is impossible (cf. J. Derrida, *Given Time*, vol. 1: *Counterfeit Money* [Chicago 1992] and *The Gift of Death* [Chicago 1995]) does not mean, however, that it cannot be "perfected" (67). Following the study by K. Burke (*Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* [Berkeley 1954]), JB explores the notion of "perfection" and suggests six ways of perfecting the gift: superabundance, singularity, priority, incongruity, efficacy, non-circularity. JB draws two conclusions from his analysis. Firstly, the distinction between various ways of perfecting makes it possible to understand better the history of the reception of Pauline theology: Pelagius's interpretation, for instance, stressed the superabundance of grace, while Augustine stressed its incongruity. Secondly, the distinction suggests that one way of making perfect does not include the others. This notion (disaggregation) prevents interpreters from understanding grace as a uniform "package".

JB's reading of Galatians and Romans seeks to be different from Lutheran hermeneutics of "works". He agrees with Luther that the Christ event must be considered as the gift *par excellence* from God to men, without taking their merit into account; he also stresses that the Pauline theology of grace is the fruit of his missionary theology (which becomes a critical conscience within the church itself). However, in contrast to Luther, JB argues that Galatians underlines the "objective" system of values rather than the "subjective" individual conscience. In Galatians the apostle is against the works of the law as a system of values constituted socially, just as he is against any kind of cultural or symbolic value other than the gift of Christ. JB contends that the Lutheran exegesis of Romans stresses



excessively both the unconditioned divine grace and the individual change that occurs in the conscience of the believer. In contrast, JB's interpretation points out the moral consequence of the gift inasmuch as it generates a new *habitus*, which then becomes a cultural characteristic of the Roman congregations.

The restructuring of the "New Perspective" proposed by JB might seem ambitious to many scholars since it advances a radically new paradigm for reading Pauline Letters. That restructuring is actually based on different understandings of divine grace in Second Temple Judaism. According to Sanders, the hermeneutics of works (fostered by the Reformation) had mixed the notion of divine mercy with the soteriology of merit and success. From this he concluded that the priority of grace prevailed over other models of perfection. According to JB, such an overemphasis on the priority of grace resulted from a univocal and uniform interpretation of Judaism. In contrast, JB demonstrates a wide diversity in the Jewish understanding of grace through an accurate analysis of certain texts. Some of them relate divine mercy with justice, understood as reward for deserving people (see Wisdom of Salomon, Uriel, 4 Ezra); but others bring out the incongruity of grace, pointing out the lack of correspondence between divine goodness and human fragility (1QH<sup>a</sup>) or sinfulness (Pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*). Paul is to be located in the middle of the argument about grace among these Jewish thinkers of Second Temple Judaism.

JB's interpretation of the texts from Second Temple Judaism and from Pauline Letters is very well documented. Moreover, his interpretation of grace as an incongruous gift (i.e. a unconditioned gift, but at the same obliging) stimulates further research. It has a notable asset: it brings out the unique nature of the Christ event as a hermeneutical key for understanding both the continuity and the discontinuity of divine grace in human history. His interpretation of divine grace as an incongruous gift opens up a new way for studying the relationship between Second Temple Judaism and Pauline theology.

On the whole this book satisfies the reader with what it announces: a reading that is "historically plausible, exegetically responsible, theologically informed, and [...] hermeneutically useful" (7). It must be noted, however, that the consensus in the exegesis of Romans claimed by the author is not unanimous. For example, the emphasis placed on the future resurrection of the body of the baptized (505-506) seems to distract attention from the present content of "newness of life" (6,4). The disputes over the observance of *kashrut*, understood as real and not hypothetical problems in the Roman congregations (511-516), are discussed by JB elsewhere (see J. Barclay, "Faith and Self-Detachment from Cultural Norms: A Study in Romans 14-15", *ZNW* 104 (2013) 192-208; "Do We Undermine the Law? A Study of Romans 14.1 - 15.6", *Paul and the Mosaic Law* [ed. J.D.G. Dunn] [WUNT I/89; Tübingen 1996] 287-308). His position on this issue, however, has not gone undisputed (see, for example, K.B. McCruden, "Judgment and Life for the Lord. Occasion and Theology of Romans 14,1 - 15,13", *Bib* 86 [2005] 229-244). Nevertheless, lack of agreement in the present case does not affect his suggestion for a coherent reading.

The topic that probably will be of particular interest to Pauline scholars is the notion of disaggregation. The idea that one form of perfection does not impose itself on others enables JB to overcome the awkward difficulties that result from the "singularity" and "priority" of the gift (i.e. the image of an irresponsible and immoral God and the question of predetermination). His understanding



of “incongruity” explains better not only the unmerited character of divine grace but also the ethical response (a new *habitus*) of its recipients. His conclusions, however, might also obscure the theological consequences of divine impartiality. The Christ event reveals not only the lack of human merit but also the paradox of divine benevolence. Therefore, separating one perfection from another could in this case be a nominal operation which only postpones the question concerning the Pauline understanding of divine “singularity”.

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### Varia

Stefan WITETSCHKE, *Thomas und Johannes – Johannes und Thomas*. Das Verhältnis der Logien des Thomasevangeliums zum Johannesevangelium (Herders Biblische Studien 79). Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, 2015. 584 p. 16 × 24

Ce gros ouvrage est la version revue de la thèse d’habilitation que l’A. a présentée à la Faculté de théologie catholique de la Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität à Munich en 2013. Son plan est très simple: après une introduction méthodologique (A: 11-51) vient la “Durchführung” (B: 53-503), avec l’analyse détaillée de trente-sept *logia* de l’Évangile de Thomas (= ET) qui se termine par un résumé en tableau, enfin les résultats de la recherche sont exposés en quelques pages (C: 505-513). Une quatrième partie, “Verwendete Literatur”, donne la bibliographie (D: 515-555), divisée en trois sections, sources, livres de référence et littérature secondaire. Pourquoi les travaux d’E. Hornung figurent-ils dans la dernière section (534), alors qu’ils traduisent des textes égyptiens? On regrettera surtout que les leçons d’H.-Ch. Puech sur ET données au Collège de France de 1960 à 1972 et publiées ensemble dans le second volume d’*En quête de la Gnose* (Bibliothèque des sciences humaines; Paris 1978) soient ignorées.

Une étude de ce genre exige de nombreuses compétences, en exégèse d’abord, en histoire des religions, en philologie classique, en philologie copte etc. C’est sur ce dernier point que nous concentrerons notre lecture, la moisson critique étant déjà assez abondante.

Il faudrait commencer par l’analyse du titre. On lit en effet ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΠΚΑΤΑ ΘΩΜΑΣ, ce qui n’est pas une erreur de copiste puisqu’on retrouve dans le codex de Nag Hammadi II (= NH II), écrit par la même main, ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΠΚΑΤΑ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΣ (cf. le syntagme ΠΚΑΤΑΖΒΡΑΙΟΣ dans E.A.W. BUDGE, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* [London 1915] 60). Si on compare ces formules avec Jn, la différence saute aux yeux: ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΝΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ, “L’évangile selon Jean” et l’on pourrait gloser le titre de ET comme “L’évangile, celui selon Thomas”. La différence semble infime, mais en

copte, la syntaxe change et cette modification doit lui revenir, non à la *Vorlage*. Il conviendrait de s'y arrêter pour mieux comprendre la nature de ET dans son dernier stade, puisque c'est sur lui que nous devons en général travailler, vu l'indigence des fragments grecs.

Relevons ensuite quelques imprécisions. L'A. fait grand cas de l'édition de Jean par Schüssler (37; cf. aussi l'"Autorenverzeichnis", 582c), mais à vrai dire les variantes du manuscrit publié sont toutes consignées avec acribie dans l'apparat de H. Quecke, cf. notre compte rendu dans *ThLZ* 139 (2014) 713. Pour Ac et les Lettres de Paul, Horner ne suffit pas et il faut consulter l'édition de H. Thompson, *The Coptic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles in the Sahidic Dialect* (Cambridge 1932) (cf. 66, 384, 446). Dans l'édition diplomatique des lignes 23 à 27 du *logion* 30 en grec (278), chaque point devrait correspondre à une lettre manquante et si le manuscrit est lacunaire, il convient de l'indiquer avec des parenthèses.

Au *logion* 1, le premier verbe est au futur, "trouvera" (56). Au *logion* 4(2), il faut restituer  $\overline{\text{N}}$ - après  $\omega\omega\pi\epsilon$  (125), ce qui rend caduque la remarque de l'A. 134, n. 35. Au *logion* 21(4), il faut traduire "Eux, ils sont nus en face d'eux" (214),  $\kappa\alpha\kappa$  est un qualitatif achmimisant, à comparer à la forme active du *logion* 37(2) bien rendue (292): c'est ainsi que R. Kasser, *L'Évangile selon Thomas* (Bibliothèque théologique; Neuchâtel 1961) 57 traduit le passage. Dans le *logion* 37(2),  $\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{W}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{E}}$  est un Parfait circonstanciel, suivant la proposition de Kasser, *L'Évangile de Thomas*, 69 n. 2 et celle de Puech, *En quête de la gnose*, 16, n. 5, et l'on traduira "sans avoir eu honte"; il ne s'agit donc pas d'un "Einschub" (298, n. 23). Dans le même *logion* 37(3), nous ne voyons aucun problème grammatical posé par  $\text{NHY}$  (293), si on restitue ce mot dans la lacune.  $\text{NHY}$  traduit souvent  $\eta\zeta\epsilon\iota$  dans un contexte de Futur I, cf. Mt 24,14 (après  $\text{TOTE}$ ) et Jn 6,37; on traduira donc: "alors, vous viendrez vers le Fils du Vivant". Dans le *logion* 50(1), il s'agit d'un Parfait II: "c'est de la lumière que nous sommes venus" (342), bien qu'on lise plus loin "kämen" (352). Dans le *logion* 51(2), on trouve le second verbe au présent: "mais vous ne le connaissez pas" (356).  $\text{AN}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{OY}}$ - n'est pas une phrase adverbiale, mais nominale (398). Dans le *logion* 111(3), le deuxième verbe est au futur, "celui qui se trouvera", cf. Kasser, *L'Évangile selon Thomas*, 118 et 28, n. 1, ainsi que B. Layton, "Introduction", *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7* (NHS 20; Leiden 1989), 10, point 9.

Il reste une croix philologique non expliquée au *logion* 13(8) et le mot  $\kappa\omega\zeta\overline{\text{T}}$  est bien orthographié dans le manuscrit (161). Il faut mettre un 'ē au lieu d'un *gōmal* dans la citation syriaque (179, n. 77).

Toutes ces remarques ne sont guère importantes, mais elles montrent que le copte, en fait, est une langue beaucoup plus difficile qu'il n'y paraît et, pour le dire franchement, on ne cesse d'être débutant. Toutefois, l'analyse des rapports entre ET et Jean doit passer par le crible philologique pour être crédible. Dans ce sens, nous reprendrons brièvement ici quelques questions pendantes.

Le prologue de ET est attesté par un papyrus grec où il ne semble pas y avoir la place nécessaire pour les trois noms du copte, Didyme Jude Thomas. La plupart des savants estiment que Didyme est une adjonction. Au sujet de NH II,7 (138,9), l'A. laisse entendre que "das genuin koptische Wort  $\text{COEI}\overline{\text{W}}$ " traduit  $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\upsilon\mu\omicron\varsigma$  (80, n. 100). À vrai dire, c'est  $\zeta\alpha\tau\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{E}}$  qui signifie "jumeau" en saïdique et, grécisé, il devient le nom  $\text{Ἀτρης}$ , fréquent dans les papyrus documentaires, tout comme  $\text{Αἰδύμιος}$ : on pourra aisément le vérifier dans les dictionnaires de F. Preisigke et

D. Foraboschi. Mettre “Didyme” avant Jude Thomas en copte était donc une opération banale pour qui connaissait la tradition de Jean autour de ce nom. Cela ne dit rien des rapports entre Jean et ET dans la recension grecque du papyrus d’Oxyrhinque, comme le souligne justement l’A. (109). Quant à  $\text{COCIEY}$ , nous reconnaissons derrière ce mot  $\text{COCYVOC}$ , comme le proposait déjà Puech, *En quête*, 225, en parlant de textes manichéens.

L’A. s’appuie sur la présence de l’adjectif  $\text{NO6}$  dans le *logion* 8(3) pour établir une relation avec Jn 21,11 au niveau du “Motiv”, le plus faible degré des trois qu’il a décrits dans sa classification des correspondances: motif, thème, correspondance littérale (e.g. 55). Il affirme que “grand” est un “Fremdkörper” sans aucune fonction dans le récit johannique (147). Deux observations à ce sujet: le filet se romprait-il s’il n’y avait que cent cinquante-trois “petits” poissons? Plus sérieusement, le mot “grand” se trouve en opposition à  $\text{OYAPION}$  utilisé bien trois fois dans les versets 9 à 13. Or,  $\text{OYAPION}$  sonne clairement comme un diminutif en grec, ce qui contraste avec le verset 11 qui décrira la pêche miraculeuse des “grands” poissons. De plus, le mot renvoie le lecteur à Jn 6,6 et crée une véritable antithèse, croyons-nous, entre l’abondance des poissons pêchés et le petit repas préparé par Jésus sur la grève. S’il y a une relation de motif, elle risque bien alors d’aller de Jean à ET, non le contraire: le recours à ce passage dans la conclusion (507) pour imaginer des contacts entre Jean et ET dans leur “Entstehungsgeschichte” nous paraît exclu.

Dans le *Logion* 13(5), nous pensons que la forme  $\text{NTACEIWT}$  signifie “que j’ai creusée”, cf. déjà l’A. 169 et n. 35. W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (London 1939) 555b, sous  $\text{WIK}$ , relève la forme achmimique  $\text{WIT}$ - de Zach 3,9 pour  $\text{OYUSSEIN}$  et il n’y a donc aucune difficulté qu’elle soit identique en position présuffixale. Le verbe  $\text{OYUSSEIN}$  est lié au puits déjà dans Gn 21,30, dont nous n’avons aucun témoin saïdique, mais le bohairique utilise la racine  $\text{WIK}$ . Dans Jn 4,6 et 11, pour le mot “puits”, on trouve l’alternance  $\text{PIGH}$  et  $\text{PHEAR}$ ; or ce puits est  $\text{BATH}$  (4,11), ce qui est rendu en copte par  $\text{WOK}$ , qualitatif de  $\text{WAK}$  qui n’est qu’un doublet de  $\text{WIK}$ . Il y a donc là plus qu’une correspondance de motif entre Jean 4 et le *logion* 13(5), elle est quasiment littérale si l’on tient compte que le grec utilise deux verbes,  $\text{BATHNEIN}$  et  $\text{OYUSSEIN}$ , l’un intransitif et l’autre transitif, pour exprimer une même réalité, c’est-à-dire un puits creusé et profond. Ajouté au “bouillonnement” de la source qui n’est, selon l’A., qu’une “inhaltliche Gemeinsamkeit” (174), on se trouve en face d’une correspondance entre les deux textes qui ne peut aller que de Jean à ET, car c’est Jean 4 qui permet dans ce cas d’interpréter ET, non le contraire.

Nous traduisons de même  $\text{ATWIT}$  de NH XIII, 1 (46,19) comme source “non creusée”, vu la parenté des mains de copiste entre NH II et NH XIII: c’est le même achmimisme. Plus tard, chez Romanos le Mélode, le Christ sera du reste chanté comme  $\text{PHEAR ANORUKTON}$  et Jean Damascène le dira  $\text{ANORUKTOS PIPIH}$ , cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961) 149a: le thème est resté vivant dans la tradition, même s’il prend un sens christologique bien éloigné.

Comme résultat de sa longue étude, l’A. peut affirmer que ET, “als abgeschlossene und in sich kohärente Sammlung”, présuppose l’existence de Jean (505) et peut valoir, en quelque sorte, comme “ein Zeuge für die Rezeption des Johanne-sevangeliums” (507). Nous le suivons volontiers dans cette conclusion. D’autres affirmations de l’ “Ergebnis”, sur l’ “Entstehungsgeschichte” des deux textes

(506-507), leur date (premières décennies du II<sup>e</sup> siècle , 508), leur localisation en Égypte, voire en Alexandrie (508-511), susciteront le débat.

S'il s'appuie sur une certaine "traditionsgeschichtliche Nähe" de quelques *logia* avec le *Corpus Hermeticum* comme indice pour l'origine d'ET (510), l'A. se garde bien de parler de gnosticisme, alors qu'il a souvent évoqué des textes gnostiques dans son analyse (141, 157 n. 33, 159, 204, 230 n. 56 , 260 n. 26, 271 n. 83, 272, 285, 337, 352 n. 26, 360, 383 n. 21, 395-396, 398 n. 18, 406 n. 8, 408 n. 13, 410 et n. 22, 423, 434, 440-444, 450, 472-473, 475-477, 480). Avec un peu trop d'enthousiasme, il prétend qu'une fois inséré dans le large courant de la tradition chrétienne primitive, l'Évangile de Thomas n'est plus aussi "secret" qu'il se donne dans le Prologue (513). Mais ne reste-t-il pas mystérieux que Jésus ait pu désirer que la femme devienne mâle (*logion* 114)?

Par la probité et l'ampleur de la recherche, cette étude permettra certainement de progresser dans la compréhension de l'Évangile de Thomas.

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